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COACHING,

WITH

ANECDOTES OF THE ROAD.

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WITH

ANECDOTES OF THE ROAD.

BY

LORD WILLIAM PITT LENNOX,

AUTHOR OF

"CELEBRITIES I HAVE KNOWN," ETC.

Dedicated to His Grace the Duke of Beaufort, B.G.,

PRESIDENT,

And the Members of The



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CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT CHARIOTEERS—CELEBRATED WHIPS—INTRODUCTION OF CARRIAGES INTO ENGLAND—MR. CRESSET'S PAMPHLET—THE STATE OF THE ROADS IN 1739—DANGEROUS CONVEYANCES—THE FLYING COACH OF 1669—DEAN SWIFT'S POETICAL LINES ON HIS JOURNEY TO CHESTER—DISCOMFORTS OF INSIDE TRAVELLING—TRAVELLING IN BYGONE DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE I allude to the road as it is, let me refer to what it was, and in so doing bring my classical lore into play. Pelops was a coachman, who has been immortalised for his ability to drive at the rate of fourteen miles an hour by the first of Grecian bards. Despite his ivory arm, he got the whip-hand of Eno-maus, a brother “dragsman” in their celebrated chariot-race from Pisa to the Corinthian Isthmus, owing more to the rascality of the state coachman, Myrtilus, whom he bribed to furnish his master, the King of Pisa, with an old carriage, the axletree of which broke on the course, than to his own coaching merits.

Hippolytus, too, “handled the ribbons well,” but “came to grief” by being overturned near

the sea-shore, when flying from the resentment of his father. His horses were so frightened at the noise of sea-calves, which Neptune had purposely sent there, that they ran among the rocks till his chariot was broken and his body torn to pieces.

Virgil and Horace sang the praises and commemorated the honours of the “whips” of their day. Juvenal tells us of a Roman Consul who aspired to be a “dragsman”—

“ Volueri

Carpento rapitur pinguis Damasippus; et ipse
Ipse rotain stringit multo sufflamine Consul.”

Again, I find the following lines :—

“ Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat metaque servidis
Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad Deos.”

Which may be thus rendered—“ The summit of some men’s ambition is to drive four-in-hand.”

Propertius, too, exclaims against the tandem as rivalling the curricle—that is, according to some witty translators :—

“ Invide tu tandem voces compesce molestas.
Et sine nos cursu quo sumus ire pares.”

Horace writes :—

“ *Tandem parcas insane;* ”

and to those who drive this dangerous vehicle the following line may not be inappropriate :—

“ *Tandem discedere campis admonuit.* ”

In addition to the above classical names, there were, early in the present century, hundreds of whips who raised the character of coachmen to the highest pinnacle of fame. Let me instance :—

Richard Vaughan, of the Cambridge “ Telegraph,” ‘ scientific in horseflesh, unequalled in driving ;’ Pears, of the Southampton day coach ; Wood, Liley, Wilcocks, and Hayward of the “ Wonder,” between London and Shrewsbury ; Charles Holmes, of the Blenheim coach ; Izaac Walton, the Mæcenas of whips, the Braham of the Bath road ; Jack Adams, the civil and obliging pastor, who taught the young Etonians to drive ; Bramble, Faulkner, Dennis, Cross, and others, all of whom have long since departed this life.

Many professional stage-coachmen were men of good education. Indeed, not a few had

received the advantage of a college education, and could quote Latin and Greek in a manner that surprised some of their companions. They could also tell a good story and sing a good song; so that their society was much sought after, both on the box and in the snug bar-parlour.

I will not here stop to discuss the question of rail and road, or to lament that the “Light (coaches) of other days has faded,” although many a man’s heart sinks to the axle when he thinks of the past, and feels disposed to sympathise with Jerry Drag, “him wot drove,” I quote his own words, “the old Highflyer, Red Rover, and Markiss of Huntley.”

“Them as ‘ave seen coaches,” says this knight of the ribbons, “afore rails came into fashion, ‘ave seen something worth remembering; them was happy days for Old England, afore reform and rails turned everything upside down, and men rode as natur’ intended they should, on pikes with coaches and smart, active cattle, and not by machinery, like bags of cotton and hardware; but coaches is done for ever, and a heavy blow it is. They was the pride of the country, there wasn’t anything like them, as I’ve heerd gemmeu say from forrin

parts, to be found nowhere, nor never will be again."

Mais revenons à nos moutons; my present object is to compare coaching as it is with coaching as it was.

It may not here be uninteresting to mention that coaches were introduced into England by Fitz Allan, Earl of Arundel, A.D. 1580, before which time Queen Elizabeth, on public occasions, rode behind her chamberlain; and she, in her old age, used reluctantly such an effeminate conveyance. They were at first drawn by only two horses; but, as a writer of those days remarks, "The rest crept in by degrees, as man at first ventured to sea."

Historians, however, differ upon this subject, for it is stated by Stow (that ill-used antiquary, who, after a long laborious life, was left by his countrymen to beg his bread) that in 1564, Booner, a Dutchman, became the Queen's coachman, and was the first that brought the use of coaches into England; while Anderson, in his "History of Commerce," says, on the other hand, that about 1580 the use of coaches was introduced by the Earl of Arundel.

It was Buckingham, the favourite, who about

1619 began to have a team of six horses, which “was wondered at as a novelty, and imputed to him as a mastering pride.” Before that time ladies chiefly rode on horseback—either single, on their palfreys, or double, behind some person, on a pillion. A considerable time elapsed before this luxurious way of locomotion was enjoyed by more than a very few rich and distinguished individuals, and a very much longer time before coaches became general.

In the year 1672, at which period throughout the kingdom there were only six stage-coaches running, a pamphlet was written and published by Mr. John Cresset, of the Charterhouse, urging their suppression; and amongst the grave reasons given against their continuance was the following:—

“These stage-coaches make gentlemen come to London on every small occasion, which otherwise they would not do but upon urgent necessity; nay, the convenience of the passage makes their wives often come up, who, rather than come such long journeys on horseback, would stay at home. Then when they come to town they must presently be in the mode, get fine clothes, go to plays and treats, and,

by these means, get such a habit of idleness and love of pleasure as makes them uneasy ever after."

What would Mr. Cresset have said had he lived some forty years ago, in the palmy days of coaching—coaches full, able dragsmen, spicy teams, doing their eleven miles an hour with ease, without breaking into a gallop or turning a hair? Or how surprised would the worthy chronicler of 1672 be at the present annihilators of time and space—the railroads, when “the convenience of the passage” enables parties to come up to London from Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Bath, and Bristol in time for the play or opera, and return home for dinner the following day.

In 1739 Pennant writes:—

“I travelled in the Chester stage to London, then no despicable vehicle for country gentlemen. The first day, with much labour, we got from Chester to Whitchurch (twenty miles), the second day to the Welsh Harp, the third to Coventry, the fourth to Northampton, the fifth to Dunstable, and, as a wondrous effort, on the last to London, before the commencement of the night. The strain

and labour of six horses, sometimes eight, drew us through the slough of Mireden and many other places. We were constantly out two hours before day, and as many at night. Families who could afford to travel in their own carriages contracted with Benson and Co., and were dragged up in the same number of days by three sets of able horses."

These coaches must have been not only very lumbering, but very dangerous conveyances, as the following newspaper paragraph, dated the 2nd of September, 1770, will prove:—

"It were greatly to be wished that stage-coaches were put under some regulation as to the number of persons and quantity of luggage carried by them. Thirty-four persons were in and about the Hertford coach this day, which broke down, by one of the traces giving way. One outside passenger was killed on the spot, a woman had both legs broken; very few of the number, either within or without, but were severely bruised."

Rich or poor, high or low, prior to this were obliged either to walk or ride in the same manner that Queen Elizabeth did from Greenwich to London, behind her Lord Chancellor.

Queen Victoria is a graceful horsewoman. Previous to the lamented decease of the Prince Consort, Her Majesty constantly appeared on horseback, and for all we know to the contrary, Lord Cairns is able to “match the world with noble horsemanship;” still we think that such an *entrée* into London as that performed by the Virgin Queen would surprise the weak minds of the present generation.

One can scarcely now realize the state of things when a passenger starting by the waggon from the metropolis at five o'clock in the morning, did not arrive at Blackheath until half-past nine. For four hours and a half were the unfortunate travellers tossed, tumbled, jumbled, and rumbled over a road full of holes and wheel-ruts, out of which extra horses were employed to drag the lumbering vehicle. Break-downs (not the popular dance of that name) were frequent; much time was occupied in repairing the waggons, and it often happened that, when a wheelwright could not be got, the road was blocked up by a broken-down vehicle.

Macaulay tells us that, during the year which immediately followed the Restoration, a diligence ran between London and Oxford in two days. The passengers slept at Beaconsfield.

At length, in the Spring of 1669, a great and daring innovation was attempted. It was announced that a vehicle, described as the flying coach, would perform the whole journey between sunrise and sunset.

“This spirited undertaking was solemnly considered and sanctioned by the heads of the University, and appears to have excited the same sort of interest which is excited in our own time by the opening of a new railway. The Vice-Chancellor, by a notice which was affixed in all public places, prescribed the hour and place of departure.

“The success of this experiment was complete. At six in the morning the carriage began to move from before the ancient front of All Souls’ College, and at seven in the evening the adventurous gentlemen who had run the first risk were safely deposited at their inn in London. The emulation of the sister University was moved, and soon a diligence was set up which in one day carried passengers from Cambridge to the Capital.”

In 1678 a contract was made to establish a coach for passengers between Edinburgh and Glasgow, a distance of forty-four miles. This coach was drawn by six horses, and the

journey between the two places, to and fro, was completed in six days.

At the close of the reign of Charles II. flying carriages ran thrice a week from London to all the chief towns; but no stage-coach appears to have proceeded further north than York, or further west than Exeter. The ordinary day's journey of a flying coach was about fifty miles in the Summer; but in Winter, when the ways were bad and the nights long, little more than thirty miles.

The Chester coach, the York coach, and the Exeter coach generally reached London in four days during the fine season, but at Christmas not till the sixth day. The passengers, six in number, were all seated in the carriage; for accidents were so frequent that it would have been most perilous to mount the roof. The ordinary fare was about two-pence half-penny a mile in Summer, and somewhat more in Winter.

“This mode of travelling, which by Englishmen of the present day would be regarded as insufferably slow, seemed to our ancestors wonderfully, and indeed alarmingly rapid; for, in a work published a few months before the death of Charles II., the flying coaches are extolled

as far superior to any similar vehicles ever known in the world. Their velocity is the subject of special commendation, and is triumphantly contrasted with the sluggish pace of the Continental posts. But with boasts like these was mingled the sound of complaint and invective.

“ The interest of large classes had been unfavourably affected by the establishment of the new diligences, and, as usual, many persons were, from mere stupidity and obstinacy, disposed to clamour against the innovation. It was vehemently argued that this mode of conveyance would be fatal to the breed of horses and to the noble art of horsemanship; that the Thames, which had long been an important nursery of seamen, would cease to be the chief thoroughfare from London up to Windsor, and down to Gravesend; that saddlers and spurriers would be ruined by hundreds; that numerous inns at which mounted travellers had been in the habit of stopping would be deserted, and could no longer pay any rent; that the new carriages were too hot in Summer and too cold in Winter; that the passengers were grievously annoyed by invalids and crying children; that the coach sometimes reached the inn so late

that it was impossible to get supper, and sometimes started so early that it was impossible to get breakfast.

“On these grounds it was gravely recommended that no public carriage should be permitted to have more than four horses, to start oftener than once a week, or to go more than thirty miles a day. It was hoped that, if this regulation were adopted, all except the sick and the lame would return to the old modes of travelling on horseback and by water. Petitions embodying such opinions as these were presented to the King in Council from several companies of the City of London, from several provincial towns, and from the justices of several counties.”

It is difficult to determine the exact period at which a stage-coach first appeared upon the road, for there is a wide difference between the stage-coach of the last century and the flying coaches of the previous one. Although the stage-coach may have improved in speed, its discomfort still existed, as may be gleaned from the following lines written by Dean Swift on his journey from London to Chester :—

“ Resolved to visit a far-distant friend,
A porter to the Bull and Gate I send,
And bid the man at all events engage
Some place or other in the Chester stage.
The man returns—‘ ‘Tis done as soon as said,
Your Honour’s sure when once the money’s paid.
My brother whip, impatient of delay,
Puts too at three and swears he cannot stay.’
(Four dismal hours ere the break of day.)
Roused from sound sleep—thrice called—at length I rise,
Yawning, stretch out my arms, half closed my eyes ;
By steps and lanthorn enter the machine,
And take my place, how cordially, between
Two aged matrons of excessive bulk,
To mend the matter, too, of meaner folk ;
While in like mood, jammed in on t’other side,
A bullying captain and a fair one ride,
Foolish as fair, and in whose lap a boy—
Our plague eternal, but *her* only joy.
At last, the glorious number to complete,
Steps in my landlerd for that bodkin seat ;
When soon, by every hillock, rut, and stone.
In each other’s faces by turns we’re thrown.
This grandam scolds, *that* coughs, the captain swears,
The fair one screams, and has a thousand fears ;
While our plump landlord, trained in other lore,
Slumbers at ease, nor yet ashamed to snore ;
And Master Dicky, in his mother’s lap,
Squalling, at once brings up three meals of pap.
Sweet company ! Next time, I do protest, Sir.
I’d walk to Dublin, ere I ride to Chester !”

As Dean Swift died in 1745, at the green old age of seventy-eight, the above lines were pro-

bably written about the close of the previous century ; and certainly not much progress was made for the comfort of passengers, as I can myself bear testimony. I well remember the lumbering, slow coach that used to convey me from London to Chichester thrice a year, when the holidays from Westminster came about. It started at five o'clock in the morning, reaching its destination late in the evening, six inside passengers being stuffed in a small space capable of holding four comfortably. At all the hills—and there are plenty on this road—we were politely asked to descend from the vehicle, as the wretched horses could scarcely drag their heavy load even on level ground. It was always considered in those days dangerous to mount the roof; still any risk was better than being stifled inside, and often have I, despite the inclemency of the weather, taken the box seat, getting thoroughly wet through before half my journey had been accomplished.

This reminds me of a witticism of a guard who, being told by a passenger that he had tried every sort of waterproof coat, but that nothing would keep him dry,

“ Why, then,” said the other, “ don’t you invest a penny in a Yarmouth bloater ? Eat

that, and I warrant you'll be dry all day?"

None except those who have been victims to the misery of inside berths can imagine the wretchedness of them—a coach licensed to carry six inside—for so small was the space, so low was the roof, that the legs of the inmates were cramped, and their backs doubled up. Then the atmosphere was most oppressive—forty, sometimes fifty, stone of human beings huddled together, with both windows up. Again, the occupants—occasionally a fat nurse and a squalling baby; a farmer, rude in health and manners; a painted old Jezebel, redolent of Macassar oil and patchouli; a fledgling dandy, strong of musk; a bloated publican, on the verge of delirium tremens, who, as the old song says, "kept his spirits up by pouring spirits down;" a snuffy old maid, whose nasal organ was so supplied with "lundyfoot" that it set her companions sneezing immoderately. Then the inside passengers were to be fed, and a strong odour of cheese, apples, oranges, cakes, brandy, rum, gin, beer prevailed everywhere.

Often in my early days have I travelled from

London to Brighthelmstone (now called Brighton) in a coach thus described :—

“ Lewes and Brighthelmstone—new machine to hold four persons, by Charley, sets out by the ‘George Inn,’ in the Haymarket, St. James’s at six o’clock in the morning, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, in one day to the ‘Star’ at Lewes, and the ‘Old Ship’ at Brighthelmstone, and returns from there every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Inside passengers to Lewes to pay thirteen shillings; to Brighthelmstone, sixteen shillings. To be allowed fourteen pounds weight of baggage, all above to pay one penny per pound.”

The above was a great improvement upon a coach previously drawn by six long-tailed black horses, thus described :—

“ Batchelor’s Old Godstone, East Grinstead, and Lewes stage continues to set out every Tuesday at nine o’clock and Saturday at five o’clock from the ‘Talbot Inn’, in the Borough, returning every Monday and Thursday. Children in lap and outside passengers to pay half price. Half of the fare to be paid at booking. Performed, if God permit, by J. Batchelor.”

I may here remind my readers that

when the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., selected Brighton, as a marine residence, and squandered thousands and thousands of pounds upon the Pavilion, the journey from London to this then small fishing town occupied two days; the first night being passed at Reigate or at Cuckfield, according to the road the stage travelled.

About seventy-five years ago an attempt was made to run through in one day, and, to the surprise of many, was accomplished; but it was not until 1823 that the Brighton road became (what it continued to be until the rail was introduced) the first in England for well-appointed coaches, first-rate teams, and gentleman-like drivers.

Harry Stevenson, who was educated at Cambridge, was the first to introduce the fast light coach, called the “Waterwitch,” and truly did he “*witch* the world with noble *coachmanship*.” After a time this beau-ideal of dragsmen started another coach in lieu of the “Waterwitch,” which he called the “Age,” and which was unrivalled. Who that ever saw that fancy team, the skew-bald, dun, chestnut, and roan, slightly and full of action, leave the Castle Square, witnessed that which never has been and never can be equalled,

in this or in any other country. With Stevenson commenced the rage for driving public conveyances by noblemen and gentlemen, to which I shall refer in a future chapter.

It may here not be out of place to lay before my readers a statement of the working of the stage-coaches in bygone days. In 1742 a stage-coach left London for Oxford at seven o'clock in the morning, and reached Uxbridge at mid-day. It arrived at High Wycombe at five in the evening, where it rested for the night, and proceeded at the same rate for the seat of learning on the morrow. Here, then, were ten hours consumed each day in travelling twenty-seven miles, and nearly two days in performing what was afterwards done under six hours by the "Defiance" and other coaches. To go from London to York used to take six days.

In 1784 I read of the Edinburgh diligence, horsed with a pair, which set off daily from the "Saracen's Head," in the Gallowgate, Glasgow, at seven o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Edinburgh at eight o'clock at night. This conveyance stopped at Cumbernauld for an hour and a half in order to give the passengers time for breakfast, and again for the same time at Linlithgow for dinner. A third stoppage took

place in order that the passengers might enjoy their tea, when they again proceeded on their road, and were finally set down safely in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh at eight o'clock at night.

About this period there was a ponderous machine with six broad wheels, and drawn by eight horses, called the Newcastle waggon. In addition to passengers, it generally carried a great portion of the Glasgow linen and cotton manufactures to the London market. It travelled at the rate of twenty-five miles a day, and was three weeks upon the road between Glasgow and London, resting always upon the Sundays. At that time the best mode of conveyance from Glasgow to the English capital was by a trading vessel from Borrowstounness ; and so remarkable was a sight of London considered in Glasgow, that a worthy citizen who bore the same Christian and surname as another friend was, after his return from London, distinguished as “London John.”

The use of stage-coaches rapidly extended itself, and there was scarcely a town through which some stage-coach did not pass. After a time, the heavy six-inside lumbering vehicle gave way to the light four-inside fast coach ; and from

the year 1825 until the introduction of railways, nothing could exceed the “turns out” on the principal roads. In 1833 the distance between London and Shrewsbury (one hundred and fifty-four miles), Exeter (one hundred and seventy-one miles), and Manchester (one hundred and eighty-seven miles) was done in a day. The Mail to Holyhead performed the journey (two hundred and sixty-one miles) in twenty-seven hours, and that to Liverpool (two hundred and three miles) in twenty-one hours. The journey to Brighton was accomplished at the rate of twelve miles an hour, including stoppages, and the Bath, Bristol, Southampton, Oxford, and Cambridge coaches were famed for their excellent arrangements.

In 1807 one of the Stamford stage-coaches that daily ran to London performed the journey (ninety-nine miles) in nine hours and four minutes from the time of starting; although the passengers were allowed time to breakfast and dine upon the road. The coach must necessarily have run at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

The fast coach had nearly a horse to every mile of ground it ran, reckoning one way, or one side of the ground” — for example, from

London to Shrewsbury the distance is one hundred and fifty-eight miles, and the number of horses kept for the “Wonder” coach was one hundred and fifty.

The average price of horses for these coaches was about £23. Fancy teams, and those working out of London, were rated considerably higher; but, taking a hundred miles of ground, well horsed, the above was about the mark. In these days it would be nearly if not quite double. The average period of each horse's service did not exceed four years.

CHAPTER II.

DANGERS OF TRAVELLING—ANECDOTES OF HIGHWAYMEN—
INNKEEPERS AND HIGHWAYMEN—STAGE-COACH ROBBERIES
—A 'CUTE LADY—A JOURNEY TO LONDON UNDER DIFFI-
CULTIES—TRAVELLING IN 1770—VANBRUGH'S DESCRIPTION
OF AN M.P.'S JOURNEY—SYDNEY SMITH ON MODERN IM-
PROVEMENT.

CHAPTER II.

IN the days I write of, Macaulay tells us that the mounted highwayman, a marauder known to the present generation only from books, was to be found on every main road. Hounslow Heath on the Great Western Road, Finchley Common on the Great Northern Road, were, perhaps, the most celebrated of these spots; but there was hardly an open common or steep hill which was not infested with these enterprising plunderers.

Upon two occasions I fell in with these gentlemen of the road. Once, when travelling in very early youth from London to Goodwood, the Chichester coach was stopped by two ill-favoured scoundrels, who were about to levy black mail on the inside passengers, when, fortunately, the sound of a travelling-carriage

was heard, and thinking, probably, that the inmates of it might be armed, the robbers scampered off.

The second adventure occurred to me when returning very late at night from Tunbridge Wells in a dennet with my trusty batman, John Hargreaves, by my side. We were ascending the hill that leads into Sevenoaks, my servant walking up it and I driving, when I heard a shrill whistle from one side of the road, which was immediately responded to. Anticipating some mischief, I said "Jump in," and, obedient to orders, Hargreaves did so.

Happily, we had reached the summit of the hill, when one man rushed forward and attempted to seize the horse's bridle, while another tried to hang on behind the gig. Hargreaves had my stick in his hand, a good ash plant, with which he struck the fellow a blow across the face, which made him relax his hold, while I gave a smart lash of the whip to my most willing horse, who started off at a tremendous pace down the hill, leaving my assailant sprawling on the ground, and within an inch of having his head run over by the wheel.

"Stage-coach robberies were of daily occurrence, and it was generally supposed that

they were connived at by many inn-keepers; so much so, indeed, that proclamations were issued warning all innkeepers that the eye of the Government was upon them. Their criminal connivance, it was affirmed, enabled banditti to infest the roads with impunity. That those suspicions were not without foundation is proved by the dying speeches of some penitent robbers of that age, who appear to have received from the innkeepers services much resembling those which Farquhar's 'Boniface' rendered to 'Gibbet.'"

In the "Domestic Intelligence" I read that "several passengers, both men and women, to the number of fifteen, going in three or four coaches towards Bath and Bristol, were set upon by some highwaymen (supposed to be soldiers) well armed, about Stoke Church, in Oxfordshire (a very desolate part at that time), who robbed them all of very considerable value."

Another adventure may not prove uninteresting. Two travellers were journeying together over a dreary common, when one remarked to the other that he trusted they should not fall in with any highwaymen, as he had one hundred pounds secreted in his boot. They had

not gone many miles before they came to a most secluded spot, where four cross roads met; the new-laid earth round the finger-post, and a gibbet at some little distance, with a skeleton body suspended in chains to it, showed that two human beings had met with ignominious deaths. They had been companions in crime, and in robbing the Mail the guard had been killed.

An offer of a free pardon and two hundred pounds reward had been proclaimed, when one of the wretches, actuated by vile lucre, turned King's evidence, and sacrificed his friend. Although he had taken part in the robbery, as he did not fire the fatal shot, his pardon was granted and the blood money awarded him. On the morning of the execution of his partner in guilt, remorse seized hold of the informer, and by his own hand he rid the country of a villain.

The two travellers, who, I ought to say, had met accidentally at an inn, reached the spot I have described; the wind whistled across the heath—the chains of the gibbet clanked, the birds of carrion hovered over the new-made grave, in which the suicide had been buried, and the body of the murderer dangled in the air.

As they passed the grave of the suicide, three men suddenly rushed forward, determined, as they swore, with a dreadful imprecation, to have the money or the lives of the travellers.

“Spare our lives! Take all I have!” cried one. “Here it is!” offering a handful of silver.

“That won’t do!” responded the highwayman. “I’ll soon see what you have about you!”

“Stay!” said the other. “My companion has our money hid away in his boot.”

“Traitor!” exclaimed his companion, while one of the gang, with blackened face and cocked pistol, proceeded to take off the boots of the terrified victim.

“If you’ve spoken false,” shouted the first, “I’ll give you an ounce of lead for your pains.”

“He has spoken truth,” responded the searcher. “Here’s a prize—a hundred pounds in Bank of England notes!”

Securing the money, the two travellers were blindfolded and bound to the finger-post, while the horse was taken out of their gig and turned loose on the common. It was nearly an hour

before they were released from their position, during which period the ill-used victim vented his anger pretty loudly.

Upon reaching the next town where a deposition was made before a magistrate, the worthy Justice commented in rather a severe strain upon the base conduct of the miscreant who had acted so treacherous a part.

“Hear my palliation,” meekly said the accused.

“Stand down; I’ve heard enough;” vociferated the man in authority.

“One word,” continued the other. “My object was not to screen myself at another’s expense. My companion told me he had one hundred pounds in his boot; I had twelve hundred pounds in my waistband. Had I been searched, that must have been discovered, and would probably have led to my companion being searched; so I thought it better to sacrifice the smaller to the larger sum. I now return the money I was the means of his being deprived of, and in future recommend him to be more prudent in keeping his own counsel.”

One more anecdote of the road must suffice:—

Early in the present century a rider for a mercantile house in the City of London was attacked a few miles beyond Winchester, by a highwayman, who, taking him by surprise, robbed him of his purse and pocket-book, containing cash and notes to a considerable amount.

“Sir,” said the rider, with great presence of mind, “I have suffered you to take my property, and you are welcome to it. It is my master’s, and the loss of it cannot do him much harm; but, as it will look very cowardly in me to have been robbed without making any resistance, I should take it kindly of you just to fire a pistol through my coat.”

“With all my heart,” replied the highwayman; “where will you have the ball?”

“Here,” said the rider, “just by the side of the button.”

The highwayman was as good as his word, but the moment he fired the rider knocked him off his horse; and, having stunned him with the blow, aided by a labourer who came up at the time, lodged him safely in Winchester Gaol.

As late as the year 1814 stage-coach robberies

continued, for I find in 1814 the Stroud Mail was robbed of bank-notes to the amount of two thousand eight hundred pounds; and in the following year the Buckingham stage-coach was robbed of bills and notes to a considerable amount.

Occasionally the victims of a robbery advertised for the loss of any valued article, as will be seen by the following whimsical and good-humoured appeal extracted from *Salisbury's " Flying Post"* of Oct. 27, 1696 :—

“ Whereas six gentlemen (all of the same honourable profession), having been more than ordinary put to it for a little pocket money, did, on the 14th instant, in the evening, near Kentish Town, borrow of two persons (in a coach) a certain sum of money, without staying to give bond for the repayment, and whereas fancy was taken to the hat, periuke, cravat, sword, and cane of one of the creditors, which were all lent as freely as the money; these are, therefore, to desire the said worthies, how fond soever they may be of the other loans, to unfancy the cane again, and send it to Will's Coffee-House in Scotland-yard, it being too short for any such proper gentlemen as they are to walk with, and too small for any of their important uses, and

withal only valuable as having been the gift of a friend."

As late as the year 1750 carriages were stopped at noonday in Hyde Park, and even in Piccadilly, and pistols presented at the breasts of the most fashionable people. A celebrated highwayman, by name M'Lean, was that year taken and executed. So eager were persons of all classes to see him that three thousand persons visited him one day after his condemnation. The usual reward offered by Government for the apprehension of every highwayman was a hundred pounds. It was not safe to venture out after dark. Travellers were armed in broad daylight, as though they were going to battle.

In Lady Walpole's Letters I find the following description of a very 'cute lady':—

"Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose's at seven o'clock. The evening was dark. In the close lane, under the park pale, and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so, I found, did Browne, for she was speaking, and stopped. To divert her

fears I was going to say, ‘Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess?’ when I heard a voice cry ‘Stop!’ and then the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my dress under the arm. He said,

“‘ Your purses and watches?’

“‘ I have no watch,’ I replied.

“‘ Then, your purse?’

“I gave it to him; it had nine guineas in it. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but I felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne’s purse, and said,

“‘ Don’t be frightened, I will not hurt you.’

“‘ No, you won’t frighten the lady,’ I said.

“‘ No, I give you my word I will not hurt you,’ he replied.

“Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch; but he said,

“‘ I am much obliged to you; I wish you good night,’ pulled off his hat, and rode away.

“‘ Well,’ said I, ‘you will not be afraid of being

robbed another time, for, you see, there is nothing in it.'

" 'Oh ! but I am,' she said ; 'and now I am in terror lest he return, for I have given him a purse with bad money in it, that I carry on purpose.' "

Again we read that not only was it dangerous to travel in by-gone days from a fear of being robbed and murdered, but the roads were so bad that scarcely a day passed but a coach stuck fast in the mud, and remained there until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm to tug it out of the slough. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous, and the road often such that it was hardly possible to distinguish it in the dusk from the uninclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides."

" Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, was in danger of losing his way on the Great North Road, between Barnby Moor and Tuxford, and actually lost it between Doncaster and York. Pepys and his wife, travelling in their own coach, lost their way between Newbury and Reading. In the course of the same tour they lost their way near Salisbury, and were in danger of having to pass

the night on the Plain. It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available for wheeled carriages. Often the mud lay deep on the right and the left, and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire. At such times obstructions and quarrels were frequent, and the path was sometimes blocked up during a long time by carriers, neither of whom would break the way.

“Thoresby has recorded in his diary many perils and disasters that befell him. On one occasion he learned that the floods were out between Ware and London, that passengers had to swim for their lives, and that a higgler had perished in the attempt to cross. In consequence of these tidings he turned out of the high road, and was conducted across some meadows, where it was necessary for him to ride to the saddle skirts in water. In the course of another journey he narrowly escaped being swept away by an inundation of the Trent.

“Of course, during the period the waters were out coaches ceased to run. Thoresby was afterwards detained at Stamford four days on account of the state of the roads, and then ventured to

proceed only because fourteen Members of the House of Commons, who were going up in a body to Parliament with guides and numerous attendants, took him into their company."

The great route through Wales to Holyhead was in such a state that, in 1685, Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Viceroy, on his way to Ireland, was five hours in travelling fourteen miles from St. Asaph to Conway. Between Conway and Beaumaris he was forced to walk great part of the way, and the Countess was carried in a litter. His coach was, with great difficulty, and by the help of many hands, brought after him entire. In general, carriages were taken to pieces at Conway, and borne on the shoulders of stout Welsh peasants to the Menai Strait.

At that period, and long after, the passage in the ferry-boat at the Menai Strait was slow and tedious, and the packet-boat from Holyhead to Kingstown seldom crossed over under eight or ten hours. Now a man may, as I did last Autumn, breakfast in London, and sit down to a half-past seven dinner in Dublin.

In Sussex the roads were so bad that when

Prince George of Denmark visited the stately mansion of Petworth in wet weather he was six hours in going nine miles, and it was necessary that a body of sturdy hinds should be on each side of his coach in order to prop it. Of the carriages which conveyed his retinue, several were upset and injured. A letter from one of his suite has been preserved, in which the unfortunate gentleman-in-waiting complains that during fourteen hours he never once alighted, except when his coach was overturned or stuck fast in the mud.

Great contrast is offered in this narrative to the present state of travelling; “only, to be sure,” as Macaulay writes, “people did get up again with their heads on after a roll in the Sussex mud, which, unhappily, is not always the case after a railway collision.”

Arthur Young, who travelled in Lancashire in 1770, has left us the following account of the state of the roads at that time.

“I know not,” he says, “in the whole range of language, terms sufficiently expressive to describe this awful road. Let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally propose to travel this terrible country to

avoid it as they would a pestilence, for a thousand to one they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down. They will here meet with ruts which I actually measured four feet deep, and floating with mud, only from a wet Summer. What, therefore, must it be after a Winter? The only mending it receives is tumbling in some loose stones, which serve no other purpose than jolting a carriage in the most intolerable manner. Let me persuade all travellers to avoid this terrible country, which must either dislocate their bones with broken pavement or bury them in muddy sand."

In a well-known passage, Arthur Young vents his spleen at the expense of the municipal authorities of Lancashire, and reproachfully reminds them that, thanks to their abominable highways, London often suffers from want of animal food, while country farmers are unable to get more than five farthings a pound for good beef!

A coach and six is in our time never seen, except as part of some pageant; the frequent mention, therefore, of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead. We hear of private carriages and public stage-coaches of six, and

attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. A pair of horses now would do ten times the work six did in the days I write of, and I cannot illustrate this better than by giving Vanbrugh's most humorous description of the way in which a country gentleman, newly chosen a Member of Parliament, came up to London. On that occasion all the exertions of six beasts, two of which had been taken from the plough, could not save the family coach from being embedded in a quagmire.

The scene takes place at Uncle Richard's house in London, previous to the arrival of his nephew, Sir Francis Headpiece, a country gentleman and Parliament man, who was strongly addicted to malt-liquor and field sports. Although only forty-two years of age, it appears that Sir Francis had drunk two-and-thirty tuns of ale, while in the pursuit of the chase he had broken his right arm, his left leg, and both his collar-bones.

Uncle Richard had just read his wiseacre nephew's letter, when James, the footman, enters hastily.

“Sir, Sir,” he exclaims, “they’re all a-coming; here’s John Moody arrived already.

He's stamping about the streets in his dirty boots, asking every man he meets if they can tell where he may have a good lodging for a Parliament man, till he can hire such a house as becomes him. He tells them his lady and all the family are coming too, and that they are so nobly attended they care not a fig for anybody. Sir, they have added two cart-horses to the four old bays, because my Lady will have it said she came to town in her coach-and-six; and, ha, ha! heavy George, the ploughman, rides postilion."

"Very well, James," responds his master, "the journey begins as it should do. Dost know whether they bring all the children with them?"

"Only Squire Humphrey and Miss Betty, Sir; the other six are put to board, at half-a-crown a week a head, with Joan Grouse, at Smokedunghill Farm."

"Dost know when they'll be here?"

"Sir, they'd have been here last night, but that the old wheezy horse tired, and the two fore wheels came crash down at once in Waggonrut Lane. Sir, they were cruelly loaden, as I understand. My Lady herself, he says, laid on four mail-trunks, besides the great deal

box which fat Tom and the monkey sat upon behind."

"So."

"Then within the coach there was Sir Francis, my Lady, the great fat lap-dog, Squire Humphrey, Miss Betty, my Lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Dolly the cook; but she was so ill with sitting backward that they mounted her into the coachbox."

"Very well."

"Then, Sir, for fear of a famine before they could get to the baiting-place, there were such baskets of plum-cake, Dutch gingerbread, Cheshire cheese, Naples biscuits, macaroons, neats' tongues, and cold boiled beef—and in case of sickness, such bottles of usquebagh, black cherry brandy, cinnamon-water, sack, tent, and strong beer, as made the old coach crack again; and for defence of this good cheer and my Lady's little pearl necklace, there was the family basket-hilt sword, the great Turkish scimitar, the old blunderbuss, a good bag of bullets, and a great horn of gunpowder."

"Admirable."

"Then for bandboxes, they were so bepiled up to Sir Francis's nose that he could only peep out at a chance hole with one eye, as if he

were viewing the country through a perspective-glass."

Sir John Vanbrugh, who wrote the above admirable account of a journey to London, was the grandson of a Protestant refugee from the Netherlands, and the son of a wealthy sugar-baker. Little is known of the history of his youth, or of that training which enabled him not only to become one of the most celebrated English architects, but also, in conjunction with Congreve, to produce some excellent comedies. As an architect, he designed Castle Howard and Blenheim; as a dramatist, his most successful plays were "The Relapse" and "The Provoked Wife," and the uncompleted "Journey to London," which was worked up by Colley Cibber into "The Provoked Husband."

"The good of ancient times let others state;
I think it lucky I was born so late."

So wrote Sydney Smith, and it is a sentiment that all must concur in. The witty divine goes on to state:—

"A young man alive at this period hardly knows to what improvement of human life he has been introduced, and I would bring before his notice the following changes which have

taken place in England since I first began to breathe in it the breath of life—a period amounting now to nearly seventy-three years. Gas was unknown. I groped about the streets of London in all but the utter darkness of a twinkling oil lamp, under the protection of watchmen in their grand climacteric, and exposed to every species of depredation and insult. I have been nine hours sailing from Dover to Calais before the invention of steam. It took me nine hours to go from Taunton to Bath before the invention of railroads, and I now go in six hours from London to Bath.”

The witty Reverend then proceeds to refer to wooden pavements instead of stone ones, the new police instead of the superannuated “Charleys,” the well-appointed cab (what would he have said to the hansom)? in lieu of the lumbering hackney coach, waterproof instead of primitive pulp hats; he then calls the attention of the reader to the introduction of gentlemen’s braces, colchicum, calomel, and clubs. He might have added, the greatest boons of all, the telegraph, which “wafts a sigh from Indus to the Pole,” or, unpoetically speaking, announces in an incredibly short space of time the arrival of a friend in India or America, nor

would he have omitted chloroform, which saves hours of agony and torture, and which is an especial blessing to the humbler classes, who, when undergoing some painful operation, have not the comforts of the wealthier class about them.

CHAPTER III.

SLOW COACHES—FAST COACHES—“THE WONDER” AND “BLENHEIM”—PUBLIC DINNERS TO THE DRIVERS—PRESENTATION OF A SILVER CUP TO A DRIVER OF “THE BLENHEIM”—THE YOUNG OXONIANS FAIRLY TAKEN IN—NIMROD ON THE SHREWSBURY AND CHESTER “HIGHFLYER”—BANEFUL EFFECTS OF RAILWAYS ON THE ROAD—“THE DESERTED VILLAGE”—WONDERFUL FEAT OF LOCOMOTION.

CHAPTER III.

THE term “slow coach” became proverbial, and was applied not only to the lumbering six-inside vehicles that travelled at almost a snail’s pace, but to every school-boy and collegian who possessed little or no gumption. Unfortunately, in those days the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals did not exist, or many a hulking fellow would have been had up for his merciless use of the lash when urging his wretched cattle up a severe hill or over ruts recently laid down with large unbroken stones—smooth “macadamised” roads being not then in prospective existence. So heavy was the draught that an appeal was being constantly made to the passengers to alight and walk up any acclivity, which upon a wet day or when

the mud was ankle-deep, was not a very pleasant thing.

Such was the system of travelling in the good old times, as they were called, when every affair of life moved on at a quiet, jog-trot pace. But when competition of the most eager kind became the order of the day, it cannot be said that mails or coaches stood still. The Edinburgh Mail ran four hundred miles in forty hours, stoppages included. The Exeter day coach, the “Herald,” went over its ground, one hundred and seventy-three miles, in twenty hours, an admirable performance, considering the natural unevenness of the country; and the Devonport Mail performed the journey, two hundred and twenty-seven miles, in twenty-two hours. The increase of speed was alarming to those who had been accustomed to the old-fashioned slow coaches, and the rate at which the new vehicles travelled was considered reckless risking of human life.

It may not be here out of place to observe that the first requisite in a coach horse is action, and the second sound legs and feet, with blood and bone. The third desideratum is good wind, as the power of respiration is called, without which the first and second qualifications avail

but little for any length of time. A clear-winded coach horse will always keep his condition, and consequently his health, because he does not feel distress on a reasonable length of ground. The hunter or racer is good or bad, chiefly in proportion to his powers of respiration, and such equally applies to the coach horse. The food most proper, then, for a coach horse in fast work is that which affords ample support, without having a pernicious influence on his wind ; or to use a more elegant, though not more forcible, expression, that which does not impair his respiratory organs by pressing on them.

To return to the fast coaches, so splendidly were they horsed, and so admirably well did they keep their time, that they fully merited the following eulogium.

At a dinner given at Shrewsbury some five and thirty years ago by coachmen and guards to the Honourable Mr. Kenyon, that gentleman, in proposing the health of Mr. R. Taylor, coach proprietor, made some interesting statements on the subject of stage-coach travelling. Among other remarks, he said :—

“ As a coach proprietor, Mr. Taylor was one

of the most spirited in England. He had, at one time, two of the very best coaches that ever ran—the “Hirondelle” and “Wonder.” No coach established for itself a higher reputation than the former. On May 1st, (the precise year he could not recollect) it accomplished its journey of one hundred and twenty miles in eight hours and twenty minutes—a speed few coaches could ever boast of.

“He (Mr. Kenyon) was in Shrewsbury that day, and saw a team of four greys, belonging to Mr. Taylor, enter the town, which had done their nine miles in thirty-five minutes. He recollects that there were two ladies inside the coach, who were informed that, as that day was appointed for a trial of strength, they might, if they were frightened at the speed, choose any other conveyance they pleased, and should be forwarded on their journey immediately; but their answer showed good blood; they said they were not aware that they had come at the great speed they had, and that they preferred going fast.

“With regard to the ‘Wonder,’ he himself left the ‘Lion Yard,’ Shrewsbury, one morning at six o’clock, and was at Islington the same

evening at seven o'clock, being only thirteen hours on the road. On that occasion he was driven by four of the best coachmen he ever saw.

"Another instance of the reputation the 'Wonder' had acquired was given him by his friend Sir Henry Peyton, who had informed him that he had frequently seen persons at St. Albans regulating their watches by the 'Wonder' coach as it came into that town. This was the only instance he had ever heard of a coach regulating the time. It was clear that the coach could not have gained such a name for regularity without good cattle and good coachmen, and it was to the proprietors they were indebted."

Charles Holmes, the driver of the "Blenheim" coach was in the year 1835 presented with a silver cup bearing the following inscription,

"Presented to Charles Holmes by Sir Henry Peyton on behalf of himself and two hundred and fifty subscribers, in testimony of their admiration of his good conduct as driver of the 'Blenheim' coach for a period of upwards of twenty years."

The subscription was limited to ten shillings, the actual half sovereign subscribed by the late Duke of Wellington was let into the bottom of the vase. The cup was presented to this first-rate “dragsman” after a dinner at the “Thatched House,” presided over by Sir Henry Peyton.

Among the numerous anecdotes the road have furnished, perhaps one of the most amusing ones is the story of the Oxford “Defiance.”

Term was over; the coach was full of young Oxonians returning to their respective colleges; the morning was cold, wet, and miserable, when the well-appointed “drag” drove up to the “White Horse Cellar,” Piccadilly.

“Have you room for one inside?” asked as pretty a girl as you would wish to see on a Summer’s day.

“What a beauty!” exclaimed one.

“Quite lovely!” said another.

“Perfect!” lisped a third.

“Quite full, Miss, inside and out,” replied the coachman.

“Surely you could make room for one,” persevered the fair applicant.

“Quite impossible, without the young gentlemen’s consent.”

“Lots of room,” cried the insides; “we are not very large; we can manage to take one more.

“If the gentlemen consent,” replied the driver, “I can have no objection.”

“We agree,” said the inside quartette.”

“All right,” responded the coachman.

The fare was paid, and the guard proceeded to open the door, and let down the steps.

“Now, Miss, if you please; we are behind our time.”

“Come along, grandfather,” cried the damsel, addressing a most respectable-looking, portly, elderly man; “the money is paid; get in, and be sure you thank the young gentlemen,” at the same time suiting the action to the word, and, with a smile, assisting her respected grandfather into the coach.

“Here’s some mistake. You’ll squeeze us to death,” cried the astonished party.

“Sorry to incommod you,” replied the intruder; “I hope you won’t object to have

both windows up, I'm sadly troubled with a cough."

At this moment, "All right, sit fast!" was heard; and the "Defiance" rattled away, best pace, drowning the voices of the astonished Oxonians.

"Nimrod" tells a good story of the Shrewsbury and Chester "Highflyer," which started at eight o'clock in the morning and arrived at Chester about the same time in the evening—distance forty miles. This was always a good hard road for wheels, and rather favourable for draught; and how, then, could all these hours be accounted for?

"Why, if a commercial gentleman had a little business at Ellesmere there was plenty of time for that. If a real gentleman wanted to pay a morning visit on the road, there could be no objection to that. In the pork-pie season half an hour was generally occupied in consuming one of them, for Mr. Williams, the coachman, was a wonderful favourite with the farmers' wives and daughters all along the road.

"The coach dined at Wrexham, and Wrexham Church was to be seen—a fine specimen of the florid Gothic, and one of the wonders

of Wales. Then Wrexham was also famous for ale, there being no public breweries in those days in Wales ; and, above all, the inn belonged to Sir Watkin. About two hours were allowed for dinner, but Billy Williams, one of the best-tempered fellows on earth, as honest as Aristides, was never particular to half an hour or so.

"'The coach is ready, gentlemen,' he would say ; 'but don't let me disturb you if you wish for another bottle.' "

What a contrast does this furnish to the hasty meals at the railway stations, where the bell for departure is heard long before the hungry passenger has swallowed half his scalding soup, or devoured his plate of cold meat !

The removal of posting and coaching from the road has had a baneful effect upon every branch of trade and industry. One example from each line of railway will show the consequences of the change that has taken place.

In the town of Hounslow, which was the first stage on the Great Western Road, there used to be kept, for the purposes of coaching and posting, two thousand five hundred horses.

Any person acquainted with the nature of the business is aware that it would not be by any means an exaggeration to say that every one of these horses, for keep, duty, shoeing, ostlers, harness, &c., occasioned an outlay of two pounds per week, so that there was a sum of five thousand pounds circulated every week in this one town, besides the money that was spent by travellers at the different inns; and a very considerable portion of that amount was paid for labour and distributed among the different tradesmen, every one of whom was benefited directly or indirectly.

The state of things on the first stage of the Western Road will serve as an example for the whole of the remaining distance, as, of course, an equal number of horses was required all the way down the road, and the effect, therefore, was equally destructive upon all towns which were formerly thriving and prosperous — witness Reading, Newbury, Hungerford, Marlborough.

On the Northern Road an equally disastrous effect has been produced. At Barnet, where formerly Messrs. Bryant and Newman, the rival postmasters, could produce three hundred to four hundred pairs of horses, and where, also

an immense number of coach-horses were kept, the grass has grown over the inn yard. The same observation applies with equal force to all towns east and south of the metropolis.

The above gave rise to the following parody on Goldsmith's "Deserted Village":—

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

"*Quantum mutatus ab illo.*"

Hail, Hounslow ! primest town upon the road,
 Where coaching once in all its glory showed,
 Where careful drivers might be always found,
 Ready when ostlers called to "bring 'em round."
 The Member rattling up at slapping pace,
 To ease his conscience, or secure a place—
 The maiden flying from a guardian's rage,
 In Hymen's "Union" venturing a stage—
 These knew no more of anxious fear or doubt,
 When John the ostler cried, "the first turn out."
 Once, Hounslow, there was many a gallant team,
 The dragsman's pride, the helper's fruitful theme ;
 How dashingly they sweep up to the well-known door,
 Where rest awaited when their task was o'er;
 Or, sleek of coat, and deck'd with trappings gay,
 Bounding they met the labour of the day.
 Landlord and whip gazed on the thriving trade,
 And dreamt of fortunes soon and surely made,
 For then alike both house and coach fill'd well,
 "And all went merry as a marriage bell."

 Once it was thus—another age appears,
 And Hounslow's smiles, alas ! are turn'd to tears.

No more is heard the mellow winding horn,
Waking the drowsy slumbers of the morn ;
No spicy "change" now waits for the down mail,
For, woe is me ! the "Bristol's" on the "rail."
No longer now is heard the busy din
In the full yard that marks the prosperous inn ;
Unheard is now the watching ostler's call ;
The only "pair" is weary of the stall.
Silent the joke of "boots," ne'er known to fail ;
The keeper's whistle and the postboy's tale.
No waiter now bestirs him for the nonce,
To answer fifty summonses at once ;
E'en Bessy's self, so long the bar's fair boast,
The cookmaid's envy, and the bagman's toast,
Whose winning smile was so well known to fame
That for a ray each traveller duly came,—
E'en she—so hopeless, Hounslow, is thy case—
Hath packed her traps and bolted from her place.

A time there was, ere railroads came in force,
When every mile of ground maintained its horse ;
Coach after coach then rattled briskly by,
"Live and let live" was then the wholesome cry.
'Tis past ! and now succeeds the general doom
Of landlord, barmaid, waiters, ostler, groom ;
The coachman's glories have for ever set,
And "boots" has got a place—in the *Gazette*.

A popular writer who flourished some five and forty years ago quotes a letter from a personal friend, who boasts of the following wonderful feat of locomotion :—

"I was out hunting last season, on a

Monday, near Brighton, and dined with my father in Merrion Square, Dublin, at six o'clock on the following Wednesday, distance four hundred miles."

It was done thus:—He went from Brighton in an afternoon coach that set him down in London in time for the Holyhead Mail, and this mail, with the help of the steamer to cross the Channel, delivered him in Dublin at the time mentioned.

What would the writer say now, when, by leaving London at 7.15 a.m., he may dine at the table-d'hôte at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, at 7.30 p.m., with ample time to have a hot bath and change his dress before dinner is served?

The writer then proceeds to say:—

"In this wonder-working age few greater improvements have been made in any of the useful arts than in those applied to the system of travelling by land. Projectors and projects have multiplied with our years, and the fairy-petted princes of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" were scarcely transported from place to place with more facility or dispatch than Englishmen are in A.D. 1832. From Liverpool to Manchester, thirty-six miles, in

an hour and a half! Surely Dædalus is come amongst us again."

What would the writer of the above have thought if he had lived to travel by what is termed the "Flying Dutchman," which now runs from London to Plymouth in six hours and a quarter, and which, we understand, will shortly accomplish seventy miles an hour.

To resume—or, as the gentlemanly gang under Captain Macheath say, "Let us take the road" as it was at the period above mentioned.

The Edinburgh Mail ran the distance (four hundred miles) in forty hours, stoppages included. The Exeter day-coach, the "Herald," performed her journey of one hundred and seventy-three miles in twenty hours; Stevenson's Brighton "Age" kept its time to the minute; in short, from London to Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, Birmingham, Norwich, Bath, Bristol, Southampton, Oxford, Cambridge, was little more than a pleasant Summer day's drive.

In order to accomplish the above fast journey two important considerations were required; first, that the horses should not be overworked,

and, secondly, that they should be well fed. Horses have increased greatly in price since the period I write of, and a team which would have cost a hundred guineas in 1832 could not now be had for two hundred and fifty guineas. The cost of coaches of the best materials varied from one hundred and forty pounds to one hundred and sixty pounds; generally speaking, they were hired from the maker at from twopence half-penny to threepence per mile.

CHAPTER IV.

JOURNEY TO BATH IN THE PALMY DAYS OF COACHING—A
DRIVING GIOVANNI—“PARSON DENNIS”—CONTRAST TO THE
ABOVE—TENNANT'S DESCRIPTION—THE OLD BRIGHTON
ROAD—MODERN IMPROVEMENTS—A SQUIRE OF 1698.

CHAPTER IV.

I NOW proceed to describe the road as it was before panting steeds had giving way to puffing engines, iron greys to iron rails, coachmen and guards to stokers, and horseflesh to steam, which has been likened to water in a high state of perspiration.

It was early in a morning, in the merry month of May, when I found myself at the “White Horse Cellar,” Piccadilly, just as the York House coach was starting for Bath. I had previously secured the box seat, and, encased in a double-breasted drab coat, waited the arrival of a noble Duke, then a Marquis, well known to all the best coachmen on the road as a most liberal patron, and a first-rate whip himself.

“Sorry to have kept you,” said the new-

comer, “but Swaine only sent home the whip I promised you this morning; you will find it in this narrow deal case.”

“Allow me to give up my place to you,” I said, addressing the Marquis.

“Thank you a thousand times,” he replied, “I am unfortunately engaged. We are going to man my new cutter, and pull to the Red House and back.”

The case was handed up; the dragsman expressed his thanks.

“All right behind, gentlemen,” he thundered, fingering the ribbons in the plenitude of vehicular importance. Away we went, rattling along the stony pavement of Piccadilly at an awful rate to make up for the lost time.

“Nice morning, Sir,” said my companion, as we passed through the turnpike-gate that then stood opposite the entrance to the Park, near Apsley House. “The flowers are all a-blowing and a-growing.” This line he sang, and then continued, “My missus gave me these beautiful violets about an hour ago.”

“‘Sam,’ said she, ‘I know I can trust you not to give them away to any girls on the road.’”

I turned round to admire the bouquet and

take a look at the wearer, who fully realised the description of the swell-dragsman immortalised in song by the late Hon. Fitzroy Stanhope. He was a well-dressed, natty-looking fellow, decked out in a neat dark brown coat, white hat, corduroy breeches, well polished boots, cloth leggings, and a splendid pair of double-sewn buckskin gloves. A huge pair of whiskers, shaped like a mutton chop, fringed the borders of each cheek, and were (as a costermonger in Knightsbridge irreverently remarked) large enough to pad a cart-saddle. In the course of conversation he invariably indulged the outside passengers with snatches of the popular ditties of the day, "Oh, say not woman's heart is bought," "Love has Eyes," "Will you come to the bower?" "Savourneen Deelish," "The Thorn," and "Sally in our Alley."

I soon discovered, from his manners and remarks, that my new coaching ally was a prodigious favourite with the fair sex, and from the roguish leer that he gave the respective damsels at the different inns and public-houses, I fancied he did not quite merit the confidence his wife placed in him. Indeed, when we stopped to change horses at Slough, I saw the

faithless Lothario present the pretty barmaid of the “Red Lion” with the bunch of violets, which she placed near her heart. Nay, more, if my optics did not deceive me, he implanted a kiss on the rosy lips of the blooming landlady, who faintly exclaimed, “For shame, you naughty man.”

As I had won the good graces of this driving Giovanni, not only by listening to the story of his conquests over the rural Hebes, who dispensed their smiles and liquor to him, but by commanding his voice in “Pray, Goody,” which I declared to be equal to Sinclair’s, he offered me the reins just after passing the “Sun Inn” at Maidenhead.

“Take ‘em gently up the hill,” said he, “and then you can have a spirt over the thicket.”

To say that I was proud is to say nothing, for, having passed a few months with a private tutor at Littlewick Green, within two miles of the spot where we were, I felt that I should cut no little figure as I drove by the “Coach and Horses,” a wayside public-house where I and my companions used to keep our guns when at our tutor’s.

“Do you pull up at the ‘Coach and Horses?’ ”

I inquired, in so nervous a manner—I was then young, and, as Shakespeare writes, “in my salad days”—that the coachman, who is what is termed “wide-awake” upon all affairs of the heart, guessed my motive.

“We can, Sir, if you like,” he responded. “Perhaps Dick has a parcel to leave for Squire Lee. Anything for the thicket?” he continued, turning to the “shooter” behind, and giving him a knowing wink, a hint which the other took at once.

“Why, yes, Sam; I wish to know whether Mr. Vansittart has sent for the empty sack I left there last Monday.”

As we reached the well-known spot where I had passed many a half-hour in the society of the pretty, innocent girl whose fair face, blue eyes, auburn ringlets, and bewitching smile had turned the heads of all the youths in the neighbourhood, my heart began to palpitate, my hands to tremble, and I should have driven past the house had not my box companion caught hold of the reins with a firm grasp and pulled the horses up in front of the public-house. Fortunately, my Dulcinea had not noticed the hand that assisted me, and, seeing the coach stop, rushed to the door, exclaiming.

“Lord William! Who would have thought it! How much you have improved in driving! Do you recollect when you upset the dog-cart close to that pond?”

“I hope your father is well,” I replied, anxious to change the conversation; “and Sally—I mean Miss Sadbroke—let the coachman and guard have a glass of your cream of the valley.”

“Pray alight, my Lord,” said the coachman, “I was not aware who I had the honour of addressing. Dick, show his Lordship into the bar.”

I jumped down, rushed into the well-known snuggery, shook hands with poor old Sadgrove, who was a victim to what he called the “rheumatiz,” quaffed a glass of bright, sparkling ale, threw down a crown piece, kissed my hand to the blooming girl, and mounted the box, not a little elated with my adventure. But to quit this spot of juvenile reminiscences. We trotted past my tutor’s house on the green, where I was cheered by the boys of the village school, and, after an agreeable drive, reached Reading and then Newbury. Here the passengers were allowed twenty minutes for dinner, where we (I can answer for myself) did ample

justice to the fare, which consisted of a splendid boiled leg of mutton and a ham-and-veal pie.

“I go no further, gentlemen,” said the coachman.

“All right,” I responded, handing him a gold seven-shilling piece, then a current coin of the realm.

“Good morning! and thank you, my Lord,” replied the deposed monarch of the whip. “I’ve told Mr. Dennis (commonly called Parson Dennis) that your Lordship has your driving-gloves on.”

Again mounting the box, I found myself seated by one of the smartest men I ever met with at that period on the road. There was an air of conceit about him that was truly amusing, and it was rendered doubly so by his affected style of conversation. Unlike other dragsmen, he was dressed in the plainest style imaginable—a well-brushed black beaver hat, glossier than silk; a brown cutaway coat, dark Oxford mixed overalls, highly-polished Wellington boots, and fawn-coloured double kid gloves. The first object of my new companion was to inform me that he was well born, that he had been educated at Oxford, and that he was the most popular

man at Bath ; indeed, so much so that he was called the Beau Nash of the road. Unquestionably, according to his own showing, he was entitled to that distinction, for he offered to point out all the sights of the English Montpellier, including the assemblies, theatre, pump-room, crescents, gardens, walks, and abbey. So delighted was I with the dandified manner of my companion that the journey passed rapidly away.

On leaving Marlborough, he offered me the reins, which I accepted ; and during the last stage he begged I would accept a pinch of the best Petersham mixture, informing me that it was a present from the noble Lord of that name, to whom he had been presented by an old Oxford acquaintance. Upon reaching the city of Bladud and driving up to the " York House," Mr. Dennis, with the air of Louis le Grand, politely took off his hat, wished me good evening, thanked me for my gratuity, and said that if I mentioned his name at the hotel every attention would be paid to me.

As a contrast to the above, let me show how our great-grandfathers travelled in 1739. Tenant writes as follows :—

“In March I changed my Welsh school for one nearer to the capital, and travelled in the Chester stage, then no despicable vehicle for country gentlemen. The first day, with much labour, we got from Chester to Whitchurch, twenty miles; the second day to the “Welsh Harp,” the third to Coventry, the fourth to Northampton, the fifth to Dunstable; and, as a wondrous effort, on the last to London before the commencement of the night. The strain and labour of six horses, sometimes eight, drew us through the slough of Mireden and many other places. We were constantly out two hours before day, and as late at night, and in the depth of Winter proportionately later. Families who travelled in their own carriages contracted with Benson and Co., and were dragged up in the same number of days.”

The single gentlemen—then a hardy race—equipped in jack-boots, rode post, through almost impassable roads, guarded against the mire, defying the frequent stumbles and falls, pursuing their journey with alacrity, while in these our days their enervated posterity sleep away their rapid journeys in easy railway carriages, fitted for the soft inhabitants of Sybaris. I can vouch for the latter, for I left York a few weeks

ago at night, after delivering a lecture of an hour and a quarter, and was in bed in Hans Place by four o'clock in the morning.

In bygone days a journey to Brighton occupied one entire day. Latterly the march of improvement has made rapid strides upon all roads. Brighton can now be reached in an hour and thirteen minutes; first class fares, by express (which are about to be reduced), thirteen shillings and threepence; by ordinary trains, ten shillings; second class express, ten shillings; ordinary trains, seven shillings and ninepence; third class, four shillings and sixpence. An inside passenger by the old coach had to pay sixteen shillings to Brighton; and for excess of luggage, if he carried what is now allowed to a first class passenger, a further charge of eight shillings and fourpence would be made; total, one pound four shillings and fourpence.

“This is the patent age of inventions.” So wrote Byron, more than sixty years ago. Had he lived in our time how much greater cause would he have had to make the remark; for since the days of the noble poet how many inventions have been introduced! Steamboats and

railways instead of canvas sails and horses ; active, wide-awake policemen instead of super-annuated, sleeping “Charlies” of the Dogberry school ; brilliant gas in lieu of the darkness-made-visible light, “whose oily rays shot from the crystal lamp.”

No longer can we hail the “officious link-boy’s smoky light,” except during a dense thick, pea-soup coloured fog in the suicidal month of November. Instead of paved streets we have macadamised roads, albeit, there are some wise-acres who are (to adopt the old joke) *putting their heads together* to form a wooden pavement. We have light broughams and neat cabs instead of the rattling “agony” or hackney coach ; iron vessels have taken the place of the “wooden walls of Old England,” though our gallant tars are still “hearts of oak ;” light French wines have driven good old humble port from our cellars, much to the advantage of gouty subjects.

Last, not least, the improved system of locomotion enables the sportsman to hunt from London, to enjoy his breakfast and return to his dinner in the metropolis, to run down to Ascot, Epsom, Egham, Brighton, Croydon, Sandown Park, Windsor, and Goodwood races, and be

back at night, while the follower of old Isaac Walton may kill his trout in some of the Berkshire or Hampshire streams and enjoy the pleasure of his (the fish's) company at a seven o'clock dinner in London.

Of course, occasionally there are discomforts connected with the rail, for on a fine Summer's day it is far more agreeable to view the country from a travelling chariot, britchka, or stage-coach, than to be shot forth like an arrow from a crossbow, at an awful rate, amidst a hissing, whizzing, ear-piercing, shrill, sharp noise, something between a catcall in the gallery of some transpontine theatre on Boxing Night and the war-whoop of the Ojibbeway Indians after a scalping-party in North America. Then the odour! Instead of the scent of the brier, the balmy bean-field, the cottage-side honeysuckle, the jessamine, you have an essence of villainous compounds — sulphur, rank oil, and soot.

Again, the railway traveller occasionally finds his luggage missing; sometimes it is lost; our only wonder is that the above does not happen more frequently when we find the platform filled with loungers of all classes. Whether there are more fatal accidents by rail (in proportion to the

excess of travellers) over those who formerly journeyed by road we know not for certain, but we are disposed to think there are not.

Therefore, to sum up, if the question was “Road *versus* Rail,” taking all the pros and cons into consideration, we should give the verdict for the defendant.

The modern lover of field sports is no longer a drunken, rollicking, two or four-bottle man; he prefers the society of the ladies in the drawing-room to that of the half-inebriated gentlemen in the dining-room; he dresses in a becoming manner, seldom swears, and, as far as his means go, keeps open house. What a contrast is this to the sportsman of bygone days! Perhaps, however, the following is the most curious picture of the sporting life and rude habits of the English country gentleman of the olden time, extant.

“In the year 1638 lived Mr. Hastings, second son of an Earl of Huntingdon. He was, per-adventure, an original in our age, or rather the copy of our ancient nobility in hunting, not in warlike times. He was low, very strong, and very active, of a reddish flaxen hair. His clothes, always green cloth, and never all worth

(when new) five pounds ; his house was perfectly of the old fashion, in the midst of a large park, well stocked with deer, and near the house rabbits, to serve his kitchen ; many fish-ponds, great store of wood and timber, a bowling green in it (long, but narrow), full of high ridges, it being never levelled since it was ploughed. They used round lead bowls, and it had a banqueting house, like a stand, built in a tree.

“ He kept all manner of sport-hounds, that ran buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger ; and hawks, long and short-winged. He had all sorts of nets for fish ; he had a walk in the New Forest and the Manor of Christ Church.

“ This last supplied him with red deer, sea and river fish ; and, indeed, all his neighbours grounds and royalties were free to him, who bestowed all his time on these sports. He was popular with his neighbours, and was ever a welcome guest at their houses ; he, too, kept open house, where beef, pudding, and small beer, were to be had in plenty ; his great hall was full of marrow bones, and full of hawks' perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers, the upper side of which was hung with foxes'

brushes, here and there a polecat intermixed.

“The parlour was a very large room, and properly furnished. On a great hearth, paved with brick, lay some terriers, and the choicest hounds and spaniels. Seldom but two of the great chairs had litters of young cats in them, which were not to be disturbed, he having always three or four attending him at dinner, and a little white round stick of fourteen inches lying by his trencher, that he might defend such meat as he had no mind to part with to them.

“The windows (which were very large) served for places to lay his arrows, crossbows, stonebows, and other such-like accoutrements. The corners of the room full of the best chase hunting and hawking poles, an oyster-table at the lower end, which was of constant use twice a day all the year round, for he never failed to eat oysters before dinner and supper through all seasons; the neighbouring town of Poole supplied him with them. The upper part of the room had two small tables and a desk, on the one side of which was a Church Bible, and on the other the ‘Book of Martyrs.’

“On the tables were hawks’ hoods, bells,

and such like, two or three old green hats, with their crowns thrust in, so as to hold ten or a dozen eggs, which were of a pheasant kind of poultry he took much care of, and fed himself. Tables, dice, cards, and bowls were not wanting. In the hole of the desk were scores of tobacco-pipes that had been used.

“On one side of this end of the room was the door of a closet, wherein stood the strong beer and the wine, which never came thence but in single glasses, that being the rule of the house strictly observed, for he never exceeded in drink or permitted it. On the other side was the door into an old chapel, not used for devotion; the pulpit, as the safest place, was never wanting of a cold chine of beef, venison pasty, gammon of bacon, or great apple-pie, with thick crust, extremely baked.

“His table cost him not much, though it was good to eat at; his sports supplied all but beef and mutton, except Fridays, when he had the best salt fish (as well as other fish) he could get, and that was the day his neighbours of best quality most visited him. He never wanted a London Pudding, and always sang it in with ‘My past lies therein—a.’

“ He drank a glass of wine or two at meals, very often syrup of gilliflower in his sack, and had always a tun glass without feet by his side, holding a pint of small beer, which he often stirred with rosemary. He was well natured, but soon angry ; he lived to be a hundred ; never lost his eye-sight, but always read and wrote without spectacles, and got on horseback without help. Until past fourscore he rode to the death of a stag as well as any.”

CHAPTER V.

COACH *versus* RAIL—DESCRIPTION OF A COACH JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO BATH—DIFFERENCES OF OPINION—THE COACH DINNER—LUXURIOUS LIVING—SNUG HÔTELLERIES—ENGLISH *versus* FOREIGN COOKING.

CHAPTER V.

“EVERY medal has its reverse.” Many persons may be found who denounce coaching as an abomination; while others declare that railway travelling is most fatal only not to the lives, but to the comforts of Her Majesty’s subjects. I pass over the dangers of the rail, and will lay before my readers the opinions expressed by the two contending parties. One declares that, among the many improvements of which this age has been productive—and many and vast have they been—that of travelling unquestionably bears the bell. The very word, however, has now become a misnomer. It is no longer travelling; it is flying over the country, luxuriously and triumphantly, at a pace that equals the hurricane.

The rapidity with which travellers are now conveyed by steam over the length and breadth of the country is a social advantage which, for manifold purposes, cannot be too much appreciated. Some may remember, and have not those suffered from, the old slow and sure system?

“This racks the joints,
This fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,”

might have been the motto of those stage-coaches which in former days pursued their way at the rate of six miles an hour, to the misery, inconvenience, and detention of every passenger that was doomed to the adoption of such conveyances. The pillory would now be preferable to the top of a stage-coach on its passage from London to Exeter on a dark, tempestuous night in December. What inexpressible horrors does the very idea suggest!

The expense, too, was no trifling consideration; for after the fare was paid, half of which was recouped if you did not put in an appearance, fees were incessantly demanded and wrung from the luckless traveller, as if he were a sheep

born to be fleeced by a pack of merciless hirelings.

Ere you started on your journey, a porter rushed up, and, whether permitted or not, seized your carpet-bag or hat-box, and pitching them into the boot, regardless of their contents, would turn round and, with audacious effrontery, demand a fee for his trouble; ay, and if he did not get it would abuse you roundly to your face. Then, the dignity of the box-seat! "*Nota quæ sedes fuerat columbis*"—pigeons they were, with a vengeance, that occupied it. At what price was it purchased! Entailing a double fee—one to the porter for casting your coat upon it, the other to the coachman for the privilege of sitting with your teeth in the wind, sharing his conversation, his rug, and his seat.

Talk not of the spicy team, the rattling bars, which for short journeys in fine weather was an agreeable way of travelling; but for distances the inside of a coach was almost insupportable. Outside in Winter not much better.

Then, again, the great improvement in travelling since the road gave way to the rail is never more deeply felt and rejoiced at than at

Easter, Whitsuntide, and the festive season of Christmas, as it enables so many more to visit their friends in the country than was formerly the case, with a greater amount, too, of comfort to themselves, and at a considerably less expense.

In the old days of coaching and posting few, comparatively speaking, would be conveyed to or from the metropolis. Those who travelled post were often detained for horses; and those who went by coach had to book their places weeks before, paying half the fare, and even then a heavy fall of snow might put an end to all journeys. Now, instead of sitting for hours wet through from the pelting pitiless storm outside a coach—instead of being called by candlelight, and traversing the streets in a slow rumbling vehicle, the traveller can enjoy his breakfast in London, can be conveyed to the station in a fast-trotting hansom, can sit snugly protected from the weather, and reach his destination in a fourth of the time his predecessors could on the road.

And here it may not be out of place to describe a journey by coach, say from London to Bath, on a cold raw Winter's day. I speak of the time when the old, crawling, creaking, rattling, six

inside vehicle had not given way to the fast four-horse light coach.

Often have I travelled by one of these wretched conveyances to Newbury, when I was at a private tutor's at Donnington Grove. As lucifer-matches had not then been introduced, the only method of getting a light was by striking a flint against a steel in a tinder-box. Your candle lit, a hasty toilet made, you descended, if at an hotel, into a coffee-room, miserably lit, and reeking with the odour of gin, brandy, and punch.

At that early hour, breakfast was out of the question. Then there was the uncertainty whether the hackney-coach you had ordered over night would be forthcoming; if it did arrive, you reached the "White Horse Cellar" or "Gloucester" Coffee-House by a little before six, where a glass of rum and milk, or some "early purl," might be had. If an inside passenger, you were subjected to being "cribb'd, cabin'd, confined" in a small compass, without head or knee room, for nearly sixteen hours. If an outsider, there was the discomfort of cold winds, drifting snow, heavy rain, and dripping umbrellas.

Then the dinners on the road—twenty

minutes allowed, with its scalding soup stained warm water, its tough steaks, its Scotch collops, “*liquidis profusus odoribus*,” its underdone boiled leg of mutton, its potatoes, hot without and hard within. Then the scramble for a nook by the fire to dry the soaked coat, cloak, or hat; then the change of coachmen, all of whom expected to be remembered; then the fees to guard and porters. Let anyone picture to himself or herself the miseries of such a journey, and be thankful that they have all nearly vanished under the mighty power of steam.

Having given the opinions of the advocates of the rail, I turn to those of the road, who thus describe the delights of a journey in a fast coach.

They suppose a fine Spring morning, when you find yourself seated by the side of a pleasant companion, behind four blood horses, the roads sufficiently watered by an April shower to lay the dust; the hedgerows shooting forth—buds unfolding, flowers bursting out; the birds carolling cheerfully, as if to welcome the return of Spring; the sun smiling upon the snug cottages, the picturesque village churches, the small hamlets, the peaceful homesteads, the neatly-

kept gardens, whose early produce were beginning to bloom—such were the *agrément*s of the road.

Every mile presented a new feature; the green fields, the earth teeming with fertility, the velvet lawns, the verdant fields, the luxuriant woods, the peaceful valleys, the shady lanes, the blossomed orchards, the “balmy odours” of nature—her breath upon the breeze—all combined to raise your dull spirits to a state of ecstasy. Then the excitement as the well-appointed “drag” drove through the village, the guard sounding his cheerful horn, and the coach pulled up for a snack at a cleanly wayside public-house, where the buxom landlady and the pretty barmaid dispensed the creature comforts to the hungry guests, their appetites sharpened by a drive of some twenty or five-and-twenty miles.

They then turn to the rail, declaring that, instead of the “balmy odours” of nature—her breath upon the breeze—the traveller is nearly suffocated with the rank smell of oil, smoke, gas, and sulphur. Instead of gazing upon the beauties of England’s rural scenery, you are whirled along at the rate of fifty miles an hour, amidst the densest smoke, the groanings of

engines, through an embankment of chalk or clay.

Just as you are contemplating a fine mountainous view, a stately viaduct, a picturesque waterfall, or a placid lake, another train meets yours, and entirely hides the prospect from you. Instead of the warm welcome at the inn, apostrophised by Shenstone, or the less ostentatious, although not less sincere, reception at the way-side public-house, you are shown into a huge room that reminds you of the spot where the lions are wont to be fed at the Zoological Gardens, where all is noise, hurry, and confusion; where your pockets are emptied and your inner man not filled, from the caloric qualities of the food and the haste in which you are called upon to devour it; and last, not least, they compare the comfort of a barouche and four, a chariot and pair, starting at your own hour, stopping where you like, with the levelling system of the rail, where high-born dames of great degree are mixed with blacklegs and sharpers, where the “hereditary pillars of the State” congregate with Whitechapel “gents” and Corinthian “swells,” where prim old maids are “cheek by jowl” with libertine *roués*, where young and innocent boarding-school misses sit next to *soi-*

disant captains and needy fortune-hunters, where unprincipled debtors are placed opposite their clamorous creditors, where sage philosophers come in collision with unchained lunatics, and proud peeresses are brought in contact with the frail and fair ones of the demi-monde.

They then describe a stage-coach dinner, contrasting it with one that could be had at all good inns on the road when travelling luxuriously in your own carriage. And they lay the scene at the “Red Lion,” Henley-on-Thames; at the “Windmill,” Salt-hill; at the “Pelican,” Newbury; at the “Bear,” Reading; at the “Sugar-loaf,” Dunstable; at the “Dun Cow,” Dunchurch; at the “Hop Pole,” Worcester; at the “King’s Arms,” Godalming; at the “Castle,” Taunton; at the “Lion,” Shrewsbury; at the “Hand Inn,” Llangollen, and at a variety of other excellent inns, many of which have been swept away since the introduction of the rail.

They dwell upon the good old English country fare, which did not require the foreign aid of ornament. Not that they censure French cooking; but what they find fault with—and I

heartily concur in this—is an attempt to transmogrify native dishes into Continental ones by what the newspaper advertisements term “a professed woman cook,” who is as fit to send up a well-dressed *filet de volaille à la Parisienne*, a *Maintenon cotelette*, or a *Vol au vent à la financière* as she would be to play a match of polo at Hurlingham, or to take the part of the Countess in the “*Mariage de Figaro*.”

The plain and perfect English dinners in bygone days generally consisted of mutton broth, rich in meat and herbs; fresh-water fish in every form, eels stewed, fried, boiled, baked, spitch-cocked, and water-suchet; the purest bread and freshest butter; salmon and fennel sauce; mackerel brought down by coach from the Groves of London, with green gooseberries, and the earliest cucumbers; a saddle of Southdown, kept to a moment and done to a turn; mutton chops, hot and hot; marrow-bones; Irish stews; rump-steaks tender and juicy; chicken and ham, plum-pudding, fruit tarts, trifles, and gooseberry-fool. Then the produce of the grape—no thin, washy claret, at eighteen shillings a dozen; no fiery port, one day in

bottle; no sherry at twenty-five guineas the cask; but fine old crusted port, sherry dry and fruity, madeira that had made more than one voyage to India. Our readers must decide between the two opinions.

CHAPTER VI.

"MOVING ACCIDENTS" BY RAIL AND COACH—SHORT TIME FOR THE ISSUE OF RAILWAY TICKETS—RECKLESS DRIVERS—AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR—ANECDOTE OF THE LATE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

CHAPTER VI.

A GREAT deal has been written and said upon the subject of accidents in travelling, and comparisons have been made between those caused by rail and road. There can be no doubt that there has been an awful sacrifice of life and an enormous amount of injury attributable to the rail. Where hundreds formerly made their journeys by public mails and stage-coaches, or travelled in their own carriages, thousands upon thousands are now conveyed by steam ; and out of those thousands how many are reckless and foolish !—scrambling into the carriages when they are moving, or rushing out before they stop.

Although it would be, humanly speaking, impossible to provide against accidents, for in or after a frost ironwork cannot be depended upon ;

still, some might be averted by extra care and diligence on the part of those to whom the lives of Her Majesty's faithful subjects are entrusted. I believe it is many years since an accident has occurred on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway; and this is mainly owing to the unremitting attention of the general manager, J. P. Knight, Esq., and his staff; and probably there are other railways equally well looked after and equally free from danger.

To render railway travelling safer than it now is, the following rules should be adopted:—First and foremost, the men should be better paid, and not overworked; secondly, the telegraph and signal duties should be placed in the hands of responsible and intelligent persons; and last, and least, punctuality in starting should be rigidly enforced, for in making up for lost time many have found to their cost that the old hunting maxim has been realised, “It is the pace at hills.”

To carry out the latter, luggage should be sent into the station a quarter of an hour before the time of departure, and the doors closed to passengers five minutes before the train leaves. How often have I seen trains delayed in London and at different stations in the country through

the late arrival of some persons of distinction ! The humbler classes do not fare quite as well, for many a farmer's wife, country girl, labourer, or mechanic has either been left behind or has been hustled into the third class carriages, leaving band-boxes, baskets, tools or implements on the platform. It is only a few months ago that I saw the above illustrated.

At —— station, just after the train was in motion, a well-appointed waggonette drove up, the coachman shouting "Wait a moment!" The injunction was obeyed, the train was stopped, and in about four or five minutes two middle-aged ladies, a tiny specimen of the canine race, a luncheon basket, dressing case, work-basket, cloaks, umbrella, and parasols were deposited in a first class compartment, and a large amount of luggage placed in the van. The darling little white, curly-haired pet, "Bijou" by name, soon emancipated itself from the muff in which it had been hid, much to the discomfiture of myself and other occupants of the carriage ! Mark the contrast ! After about an hour's journey we stopped at a very rural station, and just as the whistle was about to be blown a quiet, respectable-looking female, evidently of the humbler grade, rushed out of the office with

merely a small basket in her hand, exclaiming,

“Am I in time, guard?”

“Plenty,” he responded, “for the next train.”

The whistle was heard, and the poor woman left behind, to ruminate for four hours upon her ill-luck.

There is another evil which many of the railways have got rid of, and which we trust will shortly be universally adopted—I refer to the brief time allowed for taking tickets. In Glasgow (I speak from experience) you may purchase your ticket in offices appointed for the sale of them independent of the railway station. To the public this is a special boon, and upon one occasion I found the benefit of it.

I was engaged to give a lecture at the City Hall, Glasgow, which was to commence at eight o’clock. The night train to London left at twelve minutes after nine, so there was not much time to spare. By taking my ticket in the afternoon, leaving my portmanteau in the cloak-room, engaging an intelligent porter to take it out and have it ready for me, and benefiting by the kindness of my host, Wm. Holms, Esq., M.P. for Paisley, who conveyed me in

his brougham from the lecture-hall to the station, I arrived in time for the train, reaching my London home in time for a ten o'clock breakfast, with ample time, as the Yorkshireman says, "to have a wash before a bite."

I now turn to accidents by road. These were principally caused through the carelessness of the drivers, a refractory team, a coach that had not been thoroughly inspected before starting, and occasionally by a coachman who had imbibed a considerable quantity of strong ale or fiery spirits. I could fill pages with accidents that have occurred to stage-coaches, in which many were killed and others most severely hurt.

If I recollect right, a Worcester coach, descending the steep hill into Severn Stoke, was overturned, none of the passengers escaping death; and on all the roads east, west, south, and north of London frequent upsets took place, more especially during the foggy month of November, where ditches bounded the main road.

I well remember travelling from Windsor to London on the box of Moody's coach, driven by "Young Moody," as he was called in contradistinction to his father, the proprietor of

it. I was on the box seat; and after passing Cranford Bridge a dense fog set in, one of those fogs that are described as resembling the colour of pea-soup. The coach was full inside and out.

“I don’t half like this,” said Moody. “If I can only manage to get safe to Hounslow, I’ll have the lamps lit.”

In those days lucifer-matches were quite unknown, so to get a light from any of the passengers was impossible; not so would it be at the present time, when almost every one carries with his pipe or cigar a box of matches.

Scarcely had my box companion uttered the above words when we were upset, an accident caused by our driving into a deep, broad ditch. I and the outsiders were pitched into the furze on the heath, anything but a bed of roses, while the insides were screeching for help. Some of us ran to the horses to keep them quiet, others lent their aid in extricating three middle-aged ladies and an elderly gentleman who were confined in what one of the females described as the “opaque body of a stage-coach.”

After some trouble things were put to rights;

happily, no one being severely injured. Thinking it more than probable that if we attempted to proceed on our journey without lamps we should meet with another mishap, I got a labouring friend who came to our assistance to walk to the "Travellers' Friend," and borrow two lanthorns. This he accordingly did; so with the aid of our own lamps and the above lights we managed to reach Hounslow in safety. From Hounslow to London we had difficulties to contend against, for the dim oily rays of a few lamps and lights in shops had not then given way to the brilliancy of gas.

A few years afterwards, when travelling inside the Henley coach, an axletree broke, and we were upset into a drift of snow—soft, but rather cooling. Upon this occasion an outside passenger had his arm fractured.

My third and fourth upsets from private carriages will be duly recorded.

It occasionally happened that driving out or into a yard, despite the warning "Take care of your heads," some half-sleepy or inattentive passenger met with a serious accident by his head coming in contact with the roof. Then, again, a skid would come off the wheel going

down hill at an awful pace, which, of course, brought the passengers to grief. An inveterate kicker or a giber added to the dangers of the road, and a heavy snow-storm, in which the passengers had to descend and make their way to the nearest wayside inn or cottage, did not improve their condition.

Of course when due precautions were taken, the accidents were, comparatively speaking, few. I have travelled at a tremendous pace by the “*Hirondelle*”—irreverently called the “*Iron Devil*”—by the “*Wonder*,” between Shrewsbury and London, and by almost all the fast coaches between London and Brighton, London and Oxford, London and Southampton, London and Bath, and have never met with the slightest accident.

In bygone days it was very agreeable, albeit rather expensive, to travel post, especially in your own light chariot or britchka; but to be dependent upon hack chaises on the road was far from pleasant. These chaises were not very well hung on springs, the windows seldom fitted closely, and the rattling noise reminded one of a dice-box in full play upon wheels. There was generally straw enough at your feet to hold a covey of partridges. Although these

vehicles were light and followed well, a great deal of time was wasted in shifting your luggage from one to another at every stage, or, at most, every other stage.

I once left London on an affair of importance —namely, that of carrying a hostile message from a friend to a gentleman who resided near Marlborough, and found it so difficult to rouse the ostler, postboy, and the man who looked after the chaises, that I got no farther than Botham's at Salt Hill.

I left the Piazza Coffee-House, where the letter had been concocted demanding an apology or a meeting, about eleven at night, was kept waiting for more than a half hour at the “Red Lion,” Hounslow, and only reached Salt Hill about half-past one in the morning. There, again, had I to awake the sleepy ostler and drowsy waiter, the latter of whom strenuously recommended me to sleep at the hotel and continue my journey at daylight. This I accordingly did; but what with the arrangement of the affair of honour, as it was called, and which ended amicably, I was nearly two-and-twenty hours on the journey by road that could now be accomplished with ease by rail in less than seven.

I have alluded to two upsets that I have in the course of my life met with from private travelling-carriages. The first occurred in July, 1814, when returning with the late Duke of Wellington from Windsor to London. His Grace had been dining with the officers of the Royal Horse Guards (Blues), in which regiment I had the honour of holding a commission, when, as we reached Brentford, at night, the linch pin came out of the fore wheel of his carriage, by which it was upset.

Nothing would satisfy the people but drawing the carriage to London, which they certainly would have done but for the remonstrance of his Grace, which finally succeeded. After a delay of half an hour the damage was repaired, and we reached London in safety. The accident might have proved a fatal one, for we were travelling as fast as four good horses could take us.

Had such a calamity happened to Wellington, then in the prime of life, no one can hardly picture the consequences. Happily his life was spared to add another conquest to those he had won on the banks of the Douro, of the Tagus, the Ebro, and the Garonne.

The second and last upset I had was on the night of my return from Canada, in 1819, when, in driving through Goodwood Park, the postboys drove over a bank and, to use a common expression, "floored the coach."

CHAPTER VII.

TRAVELLING IN IRELAND—BIANCONI'S CARS—JOURNEY FROM CORK TO DUBLIN IN A POST-CHAISE—IRISH WIT—A POOR-LAW COMMISSIONER—MR. PEABODY—SIR WALTER SCOTT AND A GENUINE PADDY—MR. CHARLES BIANCONI—IRISH CAR DRIVERS.

CHAPTER VII.

TRAVELLING by road in Ireland was and is very different from what it was and is in England. The mail and stage-coaches, almost similar to the English ones, were well-horsed, and kept their time very regularly. Occasionally “a frolicsome baste,” or “rare bit of blood who won the plate at the Curragh,” would start off at a tremendous pace, upset the “drag,” the driver assuring the passengers that they were the “quietest craythures in Ireland,” adding, “I’ll give it ye, ye bastes, ye venomous sarpints, when I get ye home.”

The harness, too, was not a little the worse for wear, having so often been mended with string and rope that in descending a hill it would break into “smithereens,” and now and then, when whisky was in the ascendant, the

Jehu was so venturesome that in descending a hill he would come to grief.

After a time the public cars, introduced by M. Bianconi displaced the regular coaches. In form they resembled the common outside jaunting-car, but were calculated to hold from twelve to sixteen persons. They were admirably horsed, had steady drivers, the team generally consisting of three horses, which travelled at the rate of seven Irish miles an hour, equivalent to nine English miles, the fares averaging twopence a mile. They were open cars, but a huge leather apron afforded protection from showers of rain, which are so prevalent in the sister isle. Post-chaises, which are now nearly extinct, were awful conveyances.

I have a very lively impression of a journey from Cork to Dublin some fifty years ago in these vehicles; the one furnished by the proprietor of the Imperial Hotel, Cork (then, and I believe now, an excellent hôtellerie), which took me the first stage, was clean and comfortable; not so those that followed. Springs they appeared to have none; or, if they had, they were so covered with rope that there was

no elasticity left in them. They rattled worse than any fire-engine.

The roof was so dilapidated and the windows so broken that, except for the honour of the thing, you might as well have had no covering at all; the harness came to pieces whenever "Paddy" gave his horses a spurt, and the cattle were "divels to go." So disagreeable did I find the journey in a post-chaise that at Youghal I engaged a car, and prosecuted my journey to Dublin in cars.

Persons who have never travelled in Ireland in these conveyances can have a very inadequate idea of the ready wit of the drivers. It has been admirably well told by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, from whose work on the scenery and character of Ireland I quote the following:—

Some one told a story of a fellow who, on grumbling at the shilling gratuity at his journey's end, said, in a sly undertone,

"Faith, it's not putting me off ye'd be if ye knew but all."

The traveller's curiosity was excited.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, faix! that ud be telling."

Another shilling was tendered.

“And now,” asked the gentleman, “what do you mean by saying if ye knew but all?”

“That I driv yer honour the last three miles without a linchpin!”

“Will I pay the pike or drive at it, plase yer honour?” was the exclamation of a driver to his passenger as he suddenly drew up a few yards from the turnpike gate.

When an Assistant Poor-Law Commissioner first visited Cork, the coach by which he arrived set him down next door to the “Imperial Hotel,” his place of destination. Not being aware of this fact, he ordered a car and gave his direction to the driver. The fellow conducted him round the town and through the various streets and lanes, and, after an hour’s driving, placed him at the hotel entrance, demanding and receiving a sum of five shillings, which his victim considered a reasonable charge. A few minutes afterwards he discovered the trick that had been played upon him.

One of the richest characters of the class we encountered on the road from Ross to Wexford; he told us how he got his first situation.

“The masther had two beautiful English horses, and he wanted a careful man to drive them ; he was a mighty plisant gentleman, and loved a joke. Well, there was as many as fifteen after the place, and the first that wint up to him was examined as follows :—

“‘Now, my man,’ says he, ‘tell me,’ says he, ‘how near the edge of a precipice would you undertake to drive my carriage?’

“So the boy considered, and he says, says he,

“‘Within a foot, plaze your honour, and no harm.’

“‘Very well,’ says he, ‘go down, I’ll give ye yer answer, by-and-by.’

“So the next came up, and said he’d be bound to carry ‘em within half a foot ; and the next said five inches ; and another—a dandified chap intirely—was so mighty nice that he would drive it within ‘three inches and a half, he’d go bail.’

“Well, at last my turn came, and when his honour axed me how nigh I would drive his carriage to a precipice, I said, says I,

“‘Plaze, yer honour, I’d keep as far off it as I could.’

“ ‘ Very well, Misther Byrne,’ says he, ‘ you’re my coachman,’ says he.

“ Och ! the roar there was in the kitchen whin I wint down and tould the joke !”

I heard a good story of the philanthropic Peabody, who, though princely in his liberality, did not like to be imposed upon. Upon one occasion he resisted an exorbitant demand, and only gave the car-driver his proper fare !

“ Bedad !” said the man ; “ they may call you Mr. Paybody, but I call you Mr. Pay-nobody.”

Another instance will suffice. As Sir Walter Scott was riding with a friend in the neighbourhood of Abbotsford, he came to a field-gate, which an Irish beggar, who happened to be near, hastened to open for him. Sir Walter was desirous of rewarding this civility by the present of sixpence, but found that he had not so small a coin in his purse.

“ Here, my good fellow,” said the Baronet, “ here is a shilling for you, but mind you owe me sixpence.”

“ God bless your honour,” exclaimed Pat, “ may your honour live till I pay you.”

The Irish car is so peculiar and characteristic

an institution that a brief sketch of the author of the system may not be here out of place. Mr. Charles Bianconi, a native of Milan, came over to Ireland in the year 1800, and set up at Clonmel as a picture-dealer. Struck with the want of accommodation that existed between the various towns of the district, an idea entered his head of remedying the deficiency by introducing a new conveyance. He had heard that Derrick, in 1760, had been compelled to set out on horseback on a journey from Cork to Killarney, there being no public carriage to be had in the city of Cork.

Between that period and 1800 no great improvement had taken place; so the enterprising Italian, who had saved some money, started a car between Clonmel and Cahir. After struggling for some time against all the difficulties that ever attend a new scheme, after inciting the people to abandon their indifference, to conquer their prejudices, he so far succeeded as to enable him to run others to Limerick and Thurles.

The public, hitherto apathetic, were roused into action; the new scheme met with universal patronage; soon Bianconi's name was uppermost in everyone's thoughts; the double cars

increased to nearly fifty in number, travelling daily over nearly four thousand miles. These vehicles were so constructed as to carry numerous passengers and a large amount of luggage; they were all built at the inventor's factory at Clonmel; they travelled at the rate of six to nine statute miles an hour, and were admirably well adapted for all who journeyed for business or pleasure. For tourists they were invaluable, as from the cars extensive views of the country might be seen; moreover, the driver was always so full of genuine fun that he enlivened the whole journey with his quaint Milesian sayings.

Generally, too, he was well acquainted with the locality, and would tell amusing anecdotes of the occupiers of the stately mansions in the neighbourhood, and of their humbler neighbours. The rail has in a great measure driven cars off the road, but they are still to be had at all the principal towns and at almost every village in Ireland.

The wit of the drivers is not at all deteriorated, and the cattle they drive are first-rate. Upon a recent occasion I engaged a car at Inistioge, in the county of Kilkenny, from one Mr. Cassin, to take me to New Ross; the distance is nearly ten

English miles, and the driver, who had an eye for the picturesque, insisted upon taking me one way and bringing me back another ; and from the time I left until my return I was kept in a fit of laughter.

Upon dismissing "Paddy" I asked him what I had to pay.

"Five shillings, yer honour, for the car, and whatever you plaze for the driver."

"But if I plaze to give you nothing?"

"Well, then, yer honour, I'll be perfectly satisfied, as you are quite a credit to the car."

A good story is told of a car-driver who was conveying a tourist through a most picturesque part of Ireland, when all of a sudden the "baste" began to kick, and showed evident symptoms of going faster down a hill than the unfortunate occupier of the car approved of.

"Don't whip him, driver, or you'll make him run away."

"Bedad, yer honour, ye needn't be afeard of that. He's a *raal sodjer*, and 'ud sooner die than run away."

I must now take leave of Ireland and return to England.

CHAPTER VIII.

COACH ACCIDENTS—ACCIDENT FROM RACING—ACTIONS AT LAW—MAIL ROBBERIES—ROBBERY BY CONVICTS—A DANGEROUS START—A DRUNKEN DRIVER.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAVE already referred to the numerous accidents that occurred on the road to stage and mail coaches, and could fill a volume with casualties caused by overturns, violent driving, horses proceeding miles without drivers, drunken coachmen, low gateways, overloading, breaking down, and racing. One of the most memorable events connected with racing occurred in 1820, when Thomas Perdy and George Butler were charged at the Hertford Assizes with the wilful murder of William Hart, who was thrown off the Holyhead Mail, of which Perdy was the driver, and which had been upset by the Chester Mail, of which Butler was the driver. The grand jury having thrown out the bill for the capital offence, they were tried on a charge of manslaughter. Two witnesses who were suffer-

ing severely from the accident deposed to the following effect:—

Mr. Archer, a respectable bootmaker, of Cheapside, London, stated that he sat on the box with the prisoner Perdy. When the coach arrived at that part of the road beyond Highgate, where a junction is formed between the Archway Road and the old Highgate Road, the Chester Mail came up. Both coachmen began to whip their horses and put them into a gallop, and drove abreast of each other at a furious rate for a considerable distance, when the driver of the Chester Mail slackened the pace of his horses, and seemed conscious of the impropriety of his conduct; but when the coaches approached towards St. Albans, and had arrived at the hill about a mile from that town, the prisoner Perdy put his horses into a furious gallop down the hill. His example was followed by the other prisoner, who endeavoured to overtake him; and a most terrific race ensued between the two carriages, the velocity of both increasing by their own accelerated descent down an abrupt hill.

The road was wide enough for three carriages to pass each other; but the prisoner Butler, perceiving that Perdy was keeping ahead of him,

pushed his horses on, and waving his hat and cheering, suddenly turned his leaders in front of the leaders of the Holyhead Mail, which, in consequence of being jammed in between the bank of the road and the other vehicle, was immediately upset. The consequences were frightful. The deceased was killed on the spot, the witness had a leg and an arm shattered most dreadfully ; and a gentleman's servant, named Fenner, was taken up almost lifeless.

Thomas Fenner confirmed the last witness. He stated that both the prisoners were flogging their horses at a most furious rate down the hill, and he was convinced that the accident might have been avoided with common care, notwithstanding the velocity with which the horses were driven, as there was quite room enough for the Chester Mail to have passed the Holyhead.

Mr. Baron Gurney summed up the case for the jury in an eloquent and impressive manner. The jury found the prisoners "Guilty."

The learned Judge, in passing sentence, commented on the conduct of the prisoners in terms of strong animadversion. His Lordship laid it down distinctly, as a proposition not to be disputed, that it was unlawful for the driver

to put his horses into a gallop, and that he was answerable for all the consequences of an infringement of this law. The driver of a stage-coach was bound to protect even the intoxicated, the blind, the aged, and the helpless against their own want of caution or imprudence. The case now before the Court presented circumstances of gross aggravation, and his Lordship felt it his duty to pronounce the severest judgment that the law would allow, which was that the prisoners should be severally confined in the common gaol of this county for the term of one year.

At the Wiltshire Assizes in 1813, an action was brought by a Mr. Gooden against the proprietors of a mail coach, to recover damages for a serious injury sustained by the plaintiff, from its being overturned. It appeared in evidence that the plaintiff was an outside passenger, that the coach was overturned immediately on quitting the yard of the "Red Lion Inn," Salisbury, and that a compound fracture of the plaintiff's leg was the consequence of the accident. It seemed established that there was no gross misconduct on the part of the coachman to call for vindictive damages. Mr. Justice Gibbs left it to the jury to determine

whether the defendants were liable on account of the apparent heedlessness of the coachman in not leading the horses out of the yard, and it was agreed that if the jury found the defendants liable, the verdict should pass for all such expenses as the plaintiff had reasonably incurred, which were to be ascertained by a reference. The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, and the referee assessed the damages at six hundred pounds.

In the same year there was an inquest held upon a woman who was run over by a Manchester coach, and the verdict was "Accidental death," with a deodand of four pounds on the fore horse.

On the night of November the 23rd, 1696, six highwaymen attacked the Ware coach on Stamford Hill, and after the customary amount of imprecations, led the horses, vehicle, and passengers under a gibbet; they then proceeded to rifle each individual, and tore out the breeches-pockets, and the skirts from the waist-coats of the gentlemen, to be certain of their contents, which amounted to above a hundred pounds.

At the moment the thieves had completed their intentions, a gentleman's servant passed

with a cart; the man was immediately summoned to surrender, which he did without resistance; part of the lading of this prize proved to be several hampers of wine.

Elated by the success of the evening, the highwaymen opened the hampers, seized the bottles, and emptied many in repeated healths to the owner of the liquid, which expanding the generous nature of the six, they insisted upon the stage coachman and his passengers solacing themselves for their misfortunes by repeated applications to the favourite beverage of the “Rosy God;” then presenting each with two bottles, they were dismissed on their journey in a state nearly approaching intoxication.

A horseman coming by, they robbed him of his palfrey, but plied him so hotly with their liquor that he seemed very little sensible of his loss; so that stumbling to his inn in his boots, with a bottle in each hand, he made all that he found in the kitchen drink of his wine, and gave them no small diversion by acting the story and knocking down several of the company, as the thieves did him.

The person who afforded this diversion to his auditor and spectators on the memorable

night of the robbery, appears to have retained much of the good-humour produced by the plundered wine when he wrote and sent the following advertisement to the editor of the “*Flying Post*”—

“Whereas some gentlemen of a profession that takes denomination from the King’s highway, did borrow a little money of a certain person, near the gibbet at Stamford Hill, without any regard to that venerable monitor, on the 23rd of November last, at night; and though they were so generous as to make him drink for his money, yet at the same time they took from him a bright bay nag about thirteen hands high, his mane shorn, thorough-paced, trots a little, with a saddle, bridle, and pilch, without either bargain or promise of payment. He hopes they think his horse worth more than two or three bottles of wine, and desires they would restore him; or if anybody can give notice of him to George Boon at the ‘Blue Last,’ in Islington, so he may be had again, shall receive ten shillings reward.”

In the year 1829, about nine o’clock in the morning, the “*Albion*” coach took up as passengers twelve convicts from Chester, who had been sentenced to transportation for life for various

offences, and who were to be forwarded to Portsmouth, for which purpose a Portsmouth coach was to meet them at the "Bull and Mouth," London. The coach had no other passengers except the two keepers who had charge of the convicts.

About nine in the evening the coach reached Birmingham, where a new coachman and guard relieved the former ones, and the coach proceeded to Elmedon, where the convicts partook of some refreshment. After having gone on four miles to Meriden, the guard's attention was arrested by hearing one of the convicts filing the chain attached to his handcuffs. Without apparently noticing the noise, he contrived to apprise the keeper of the circumstance, who took the guard's situation behind, the guard placing himself by the side of the coachman on the box. After this alteration everything became quiet, and there were no appearances of an attempt at escape.

The coach now approached Coventry, through which it passed ; and after it had proceeded nine miles, in a sequestered part of the road, where trees extend on each side upwards of six miles, and not a house is near, in an instant four of the convicts seized hold of the coachman and

guard, stopped the horses, and succeeded in fastening both coachman and guard with cords and straps. While this was going on, they stated that they did not intend to injure them or rob the coach, but were determined at every hazard to regain their liberty. While this scene was going on in front of the coach, five other convicts seized the keeper behind, and rifling his pockets obtained the keys of the handcuffs.

The confusion outside was the signal to the remaining convicts within; instantly the keeper was laid hold of and confined, and, having got possession of his handcuff-keys also, they lost no time in manacling him. The convicts then descended, and began endeavouring to extricate themselves from their fetters, a work which occupied them some time, and in which, notwithstanding their violence and ingenuity, they made very little progress.

While thus engaged, they were suddenly alarmed by the noise of a coach approaching, and immediately rushed to the fields. As the night was exceedingly dark, they succeeded in making their escape before the "Alliance," Liverpool coach, came up, by which time the guard and coachman had extricated themselves,

and were assisting in unbinding the keepers. Before the convicts were alarmed by the Liverpool coach, they had detached the horses from the “Albion,” probably, if necessary, to make use of them in their flight. Most of them were soon retaken.

On the 13th an accident happened to the “Red Rover,” Manchester and London coach. When it arrived at Stone, about twelve o’clock at night, it had ten outside passengers and one inside. It stopped as usual at the “Falcon Inn” to change horses. When the fresh horses were put to, eight of the outside passengers had resumed their seats, the gentleman inside retaining his place. The coachman and guard were one of them in the yard, and the other in the kitchen of the inn. The horses started off, turned the sharp corner of the road leading to Stafford, and proceeded at a moderate pace. The outside passengers, on perceiving their situation, began to jump off the coach, and by the time the coach had proceeded a quarter of a mile on the road every outside passenger had quitted it. In their falls they all received injuries more or less severe.

After the outside passengers had left the “Red Rover,” the horses still pursued their

course, and when the Birmingham and Liverpool Mail met them near Ashton they were going at a comparatively steady pace. The “Beehive” afterwards met them near the turnpike gate, at which they were on the full gallop. They avoided, however, any collision with the “Beehive,” as they had previously done with the mail.

On arriving at Tillington, about a mile from Stafford, the coach was upset. The gentleman inside, having early learned the situation in which he was placed, took his seat on the floor of the coach, and did not stir during the whole time; the consequence was that he escaped without the slightest injury.

In August, 1839, on the arrival of the Falmouth Mail at Bodmin, many persons, as is usual at the assizes, were waiting to proceed by it to Exeter, and four inside and three outside passengers were taken up there. The coach was driven by a man who was not the regular coachman, but was considered to be an experienced and sober man. The guard was a young man who had been but recently placed upon that station, and was not very well accustomed to the road.

After proceeding a short distance the passen-

gers perceived that the driver was very much intoxicated, and they insisted that he should not drive the coach further; accordingly the guard took the reins, and the coachman took his seat behind.

Shortly before reaching the “Jamaica Inn,” situate on Bodmin Moors, and ten miles from that town, there is a very steep descent, with a sharp turn at the bottom of the hill, and then a steep ascent up to the inn, where the coach changes horses, and its proper time of arrival was about twelve o’clock. The people at the public-house were alarmed by several horses galloping up to the door and then stopping, and upon going out they discovered they were the mail horses, but with scarcely any harness upon them.

It appeared that the guard intended to drag the wheel down the hill, but, the night being very dark and wet, and not well knowing the road, he had got beyond the brow of the hill before he was aware of it; he endeavoured to pull up, and it was believed the coachman got down to tie the wheel, but that he was too tipsy and fell down. The coach then proceeded down the hill at a most frightful pace. Being heavily laden, it rocked from side to side, and on

getting to the turn over it went with the most dreadful crash. The horses fortunately at once broke away. All the passengers were more or less stunned, and many of those outside were seriously injured with fractured ribs and bones.

CHAPTER IX.

EXTRAORDINARY OCCURRENCE—COACH ACCIDENTS—DANGER ATTENDING PRINCE GEORGE OF DENMARK'S VISIT TO PETWORTH—THE MAILS STOPPED BY SEVERE SNOWSTORMS—SLEDGES USED FOR THE MAILS—DEATH FROM INCLEMENCY OF WEATHER—DREADFUL STORMS—FLOODS IN SCOTLAND IN 1829—ACCIDENT TO THE BATH AND DEVONPORT MAILS—MAIL ROBBERIES IN 1839—COACHING IN AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER IX.

ONE of the most serious accidents was caused by the breaking down of the Hertford coach, by which nearly all the passengers, thirty-four in number, were severely hurt.

An extraordinary occurrence connected with the road occurred in April, 1820, when a gentleman of noble connection, high fashion, and large fortune had his carriage and horses seized on their way from Brighton to London, in consequence of the carriage containing smuggled goods. A replevin was afterwards effected, on the payment of five hundred pounds. The real state of the case was as follows:—

The coachman had the folly to secrete two half-ankers of Hollands gin within the vehicle; and his fellow-servant, the footman, angry at not being let into the secret, laid an

information, and the seizure of the carriage and horse was the consequence.

Although, unfortunately, there have been of late years many fatal accidents by rail, caused by carelessness, inattention, and the over-working of pointsmen and others employed on the respective lines, I question much, taking into consideration the thousands on thousands that travel by steam, as compared with those that journeyed by the road, whether the accidents were not as serious and as numerous in the days of coaching as they now are.

I shall confine myself to mail and stage-coaches, albeit private carriages and post-chaises were not exempt from breakings down, upsets, and other casualties, caused by drunken or reckless drivers, runaway horses, or by fragile springs, wheels, axletrees, and poles.

Macaulay, as I have already said, in describing the mishaps that befell Prince George of Denmark and his suite when visiting the stately mansion of Petworth, draws a favourable contrast between the effects of an accident on the road in bygone days and a railway collision in our time; but the great historian would have thought differently had he been aware of the

dangers of the road which I am about to record.

Prince George and his courtiers were overturned and stuck fast in the mud upon their journey; but, at the pace they travelled at, no serious consequence was to be apprehended — they were six hours going nine miles.

I will now select out of a number a few cases of accidents caused by the inclemency of the weather, carelessness, and reckless driving.

It often happened that during heavy snow-storms travelling was impracticable. In March, 1827, the storm was so violent in Scotland that the mails, especially those from the South, were stopped for several days, although no snow had fallen further south than Carlisle.

On many parts of the road between Carlisle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow a path had to be cut out by the labour of men the whole way; the snow was so deep as to rise in many places above the heads of the outside passengers of the stage-coaches, while those in the inside saw nothing on their right and on their left but rough walls of snow.

The mails dispatched from Glasgow to the

south were twenty-four hours proceeding to Douglas Mill, and the mail from Glasgow to Edinburgh only proceeded three miles, though drawn by six horses. The guard and coachman set forward with the mail-bags on horseback, and with great exertion reached Holytown, seven miles further, in as many hours.

On the following morning another attempt was made, but, after proceeding a mile, both coachman and guard were obliged to return to Holytown. A number of men were then employed to clear the road, and at three o'clock in the afternoon they made a second attempt, but could only reach Shotts, as the men engaged in cutting the road were obliged to desist, in consequence of the wind filling up the path as fast as they cleared it. Next morning they started again at half-past five, and only reached Edinburgh, in a very exhausted state, in about twelve hours.

Again, in 1837 one of the heaviest falls of snow ever remembered in this country took place on the Christmas night. It extended over every part of the kingdom. So deep were the drifts of snow that in some of the lower grounds it was from forty feet to fifty feet deep; thus in many parts of the country

all communication by the usual modes of travelling was entirely suspended. The impediments to the mails were of the most serious description. Not a single mail of the 26th of December, which ought to have arrived by six o'clock on Monday morning, reached the Post Office before half-past eight in the evening. Of the mails sent out from London on Christmas night, the Dover went twenty miles and returned, the coachman and guard declaring the roads to be utterly impassable. The letters were conveyed daily from Canterbury to Dover on sledges drawn by three and four horses, tandem. Occasionally they were forwarded by means of pack-horses. The fare for a passenger on a sledge was two pounds.

Occasionally passengers suffered from the inclemency of the weather. On one occasion when the Bath coach arrived at Chippenham, the people of the inn were surprised at seeing three outside passengers lying in a state of insensibility. On a nearer approach they perceived that vitality had been actually extinct in two of them for some time, the bodies being perfectly cold. The third, a soldier, had some faint signs of animation left, but he

expired the following morning. On the above fatal night it rained incessantly, and the cold was intense.

In 1838 one of the most terrible storms of thunder and lightning that had been witnessed for many years took place on the 28th of August, during which the Royal Mail, on its way from York to Leeds, was overturned a short distance before its arrival at Tadcaster. The vivid glare of the lightning and the roar of the thunder so affrighted the horses that they started off, ran the coach upon an embankment, and it was instantly overturned. There were three inside and three outside passengers, besides the coachman and guard, all of whom, with the exception of the coachman, escaped un-hurt.

A more serious accident occurred in October. Whilst the Coburg coach, on its way from Perth to Edinburgh, was receiving the passengers and luggage from Newhalls Pier, South Queensferry, the leaders suddenly wheeled round, and, notwithstanding that the guard and coachman were almost instantly at their heads, coach and horses were precipitated over the quay. Some of the outside passengers escaped by throw-

ing themselves on the pier, but those in the inside were less fortunate. The inside passengers consisted of three ladies and one gentleman. The coach having fallen into the sea on its side, one lady and gentleman managed to get their heads thrust out of the window above the water till extricated from their perilous situation; the other two were taken out dead. The only outside passenger who kept his place on the coach until it was precipitated into the water was pitched into the sea a considerable distance, but, fortunately, saved himself by swimming ashore. The pole having broken, the leaders were saved, but the two wheel horses were drowned.

Another accident occurred at Galashiels, where there is a bridge uniting two curves of the road; upon reaching it one of the horses commenced kicking, and in a few moments had its hind legs over the bar. The coachman tried to arrest their progress, but his efforts were useless, and the coach was overturned in a few seconds. At that time there were four persons inside; one lady had her arm broken, and a gentleman had his leg broken; the other passengers sustained serious

injuries, one dying at Galashiels from the effect of the injuries he sustained.

About nine o'clock the same night the North Briton coach was approaching Chorley, in Lancashire. The coach was meeting some waggons, and was followed by a number of carts. The coachman, to escape the waggons, drew on the opposite side, and, owing to the mist, went too far, and plunged the vehicle down a precipice. One man was killed on the spot.

During the floods in Scotland, in 1829, the coast mail-coach, having left Fochabers at four P.M., got forward, without any interruption, to the Spey, where, in consequence of the boisterous rapidity of the torrent, sweeping along with it corn and wood in great abundance, the boatmen were with difficulty prevailed on to ferry the guard across. They stated their determination not to venture again while the current remained so strong. (Since that period a substantial bridge has been thrown over the Spey.) On his way to the Findhorn the guard of the mail-coach called on Mr. Davison, who resides about two miles to the eastward of that river. He accompanied

the guard, and promptly procured six men to carry the mails across the river, which was done with scarcely any detention, although the ebbing current was fearfully strong. Four of Mr. Davidson's men then volunteered their services and carried the bags on their backs to Earnhill, where the guard procured a horse and cart, in which he proceeded to Dyke. There the Reverend Mr. Anken was waiting in readiness, with his servants and several lights, to assist to forward the mail. One of the servants from the manse waded before the cart for upwards of a mile, the water covering the road, in many places to the depth of three feet. In Auldearn the guard was met by the Reverend Mr. Barclay, who informed him that the bridge of Nairn had been swept away.

After a most boisterous night the cart arrived opposite to Nairn, where, the guard blowing his horn, several persons instantly came forward and advised him not to attempt to cross the bridge, a great part of it having fallen. Finding it, however, impossible to get a boat, he drove the cart back to Auldearn, where he remained till three o'clock in the morning, when he again set out on his way to Inverness; and,

there being still from two to three feet in breadth of the bridge standing, he, with great peril, passed it.

Great apprehensions were entertained that the bridge of Daviot would have been swept away, although founded on a rock considerably beyond the usual height of the water. If this bridge had been carried away the communication with the south by this road, at least for carriages and carts, would have been completely cut off, as there is no place within four miles of the Highland road where the river is fordable. After much toil and perseverance the guard reached his destination at Inverness.

In July, 1827, the Bath mail-coach was overturned on its way from London, between Reading and Newbury, in consequence of the horses taking fright and bolting from the road into a gravel-pit. The coachman was thrown from the box among the horses, and received several contusions from being trod upon. The guard and a foreigner, who were on the top, were precipitated by the shock to such a distance, and with such violence, as would probably have proved fatal to them had not the earth and gravel on which they lighted been saturated with

the rain that fell in the course of the day; and to the same cause may be ascribed the trifling injury done to the horses and the coach. In a few minutes after the accident took place a Bath coach came up. The passengers rendered every assistance in their power, and, with some difficulty, succeeded in extricating the inside passengers from the mail. Among them was a naval officer who was going to join his ship at Plymouth, but he had suffered so much from the concussion that he was speechless and unable to move. He was conveyed to a small cottage on the roadside, but died the following day.

In December of the same year, as the Salisbury coach was on its journey to London, the fog was so thick that the coachman could not see his way, and on entering Bedfont, near Hounslow, the horses went off the road into the pond called the King's Water, dragging the coach along with them. One of the passengers, Mr. Lockhart Wainwright, a young man of five-and-twenty years of age, belonging to the Light Dragoons, was killed on the spot. The water was about two feet deep, with a soft bottom of mud about two feet more. Whether

he was suffocated in the mud or killed by a blow was not ascertained.

In the inside of the coach were four females —the wife of the deceased, her maid, a Swiss governess in the family of the Marquis of Abercorn, and another lady. They all narrowly escaped drowning. Nothing but the speedy assistance from Bedfont could have saved them. Above one hundred persons were assembled in a few moments, most of them soldiers from Bedfont. The soldiers leaped into the water and extricated the ladies from their perilous situation ; the body of the coach lying on its side, with one of the horses drowned, and the rest kicking and plunging violently. The inside passengers were bruised, but not dangerously. Mr. Wainwright owed his death to his humanity. The night being very severe he had given his place inside to his wife's maid, and mounted the box beside the coachman, with whom he was conversing at the time of the accident.

In April, 1826, the Dorking coach left the “Elephant and Castle” at nine o'clock, full inside and out, and arrived safe at Ewell, when the driver and proprietor, Joseph Walker, alighted for the purpose of delivering a parcel from the

back part of the coach, and gave the reins to a boy who sat on the box.

While he was delivering the parcel to a person who stood near the after wheel of the coach the boy cracked the whip, and the horses set off at full speed. Several attempts were made to stop them, but in vain; they passed Ewell church, and tore away about twelve yards of strong paling, when, the wheels mounting a small eminence, the coach was overturned, and the whole of the passengers were thrown from the roof. Some of them were in a state of insensibility, showing no symptoms of life. One female, who was thrown upon some spikes, which entered her breast and neck, was dreadfully mutilated, none of her features being distinguishable; she lingered until the following day, when she expired in the greatest agony.

While the "True Blue" coach, which ran daily between Leeds and Wakefield, was descending Belle-hill (the precaution of locking the wheel not having been observed) the horses got into a gallop, and at the bottom, the coach being on the wrong side of the road, came in contact with a coal-cart with such violence as to break the shaft of the

cart and to tear away the wheel of the coach with a part of the axletree. The coachman was thrown from the box and pitched with his head upon the ground, by which his skull was dreadfully fractured, and he died instantly. The coach went forward on three wheels for ten yards, and then fell over. One of the outside passengers received a severe internal injury, and very faint hopes were entertained of his recovery. Another of the outside passengers was thrown under the coach, and had his thigh broken in two places. He was conveyed to the Leeds General Infirmary, and suffered the amputation of his limb, but died in the course of the night.

In August, 1828, as the Devonport Mail was leaving London, the horses, which were thoroughbred, took fright, and ran off at full speed. The coachman was unable to stop them, and in passing Market Street, the near wheels of the coach coming in contact with the lamp-post at the corner, the pole and splinter-bar were broken, the horses broke loose from the carriage, and galloped off, dragging the pole and broken bar after them, till the near leader rushed against the lamp-

post at the corner of Bury Street, the next street to Market Street, with such force that she broke the spine of her back.

Another accident occurred on the 20th. The turnpike gate at Matterby, between Winchester and Alresford, is placed at the foot of a hill. The horses of the London and Poole Mail, having become unmanageable at the top of the hill, descended it at a furious gallop, and came so violently in contact with the gate-post, that the post itself was broken off and carried to a considerable distance. One of the wheel-horses had his brains knocked out by the concussion, and the passengers were thrown nearly twenty yards from the coach. One of them was severely injured, but none were killed. The coachman had three ribs and his right arm broken, his eye knocked out, and his head otherwise so bruised and cut that blood flowed copiously from his mouth, nose, and ears. The guard saved himself by lying down on the footboard. The coach, notwithstanding the shock, was not overturned.

Again, on the 23rd, as the Mail from Barnstaple to Bristol had changed horses at Wivelscombe, and the coachman was about

to mount the box, some noise in the street caused the horses to move down the hill. The coachman used every effort to stop them, till he was knocked down. They proceeded to the bottom of the hill, and in turning a corner the coach upset. Of three outside passengers two were thrown with great violence over a wall, one of them receiving a severe contusion in the head, and the latter having an arm broken. The third was killed. An inside passenger had an arm fractured.

In March, 1830, as the Manchester and Huddersfield Mail was returning from the former to the latter place, the horses broke out into a gallop in coming down the hill near Thornton Lodge, and became unmanageable. On arriving at Longroyd Bridge, the mail came violently in contact with the curbstone and the parapet, and the coachman and three outside passengers were precipitated over the parapet on the rocks and gravel below, a fall of eight or nine yards. The horses then broke the pole and proceeded with it at a furious rate to Huddersfield, in the streets of which two of them fell from exhaustion, and, being entangled in the harness, a stop was put to

the career of the other two. Of the three passengers, one was found senseless, and died immediately; another had a leg broken; the coachman was much injured; the third passenger, though his fall was four feet lower than that of his companions in misfortune, sustained scarcely any injury. Two other passengers and the guard were providentially thrown upon the road, and were but slightly hurt.

In the month of September, 1836, three fatal coach accidents occurred. On the 10th, as the Peveril, Manchester, and London night coach was on its way to London, and about five miles beyond Bedford, the pole-chain got loose and one of the horses began kicking and plunging, and almost immediately the end of the pole attached to the coach became unfastened. The weight of the coach pressed upon the horses (the coach then being at the brow of a hill), and they had no power of resistance. The coachman kept the horses in the road till they reached the bottom of the hill, when the near wheels ran upon the grass, which was not more than four or five inches higher than the road, and caused the coach to overturn on the off side into

the road. One gentleman attempted to jump off; he fell upon his face, and the coach fell upon him, and on the coachman. They remained nearly a quarter of an hour in that position, and when extricated the passenger was quite dead, and the coachman severely injured, one shoulder being dislocated, and his head and body much cut and injured. Of the male passengers four had their shoulders dislocated.

In the month of February, 1807, as the Liverpool mail coach was changing horses at the inn at Monk's Heath, between Congleton and Newcastle-under-Lyne, the horses which had performed the stage from Congleton having just been taken off, and separated, hearing Sir Peter Warberton's foxhounds in full cry, immediately started after them with their harness on, and kept up the chase to the last. One of them, a blood mare, kept the track with the whipper-in, and gallantly followed him for about two hours, over every leap he took, until the fox, who was a cowardly rogue, had led them round in a ring fence, and ran to ground. The sportsmen who witnessed the feats of this gallant animal were Sir Harry Mainwaring, Messrs. Cholmondeley, Layford

Brooke, Edwin Corbett, Davenport, Townshend, Pickford, &c. These spirited horses were led back to the inn at Monk's Heath, and performed their stage back to Congleton the same evening, apparently in higher spirits for having had a gallop with the hounds.

Mail robberies, though not so prevalent as in former years, existed as late as the year 1839; for in the month of June, at the Worship Street office, information was given of a daring attempt to rob the mail between Enfield and Edmonton. In October of the same year a box containing five thousand pounds in notes and gold was stolen from the Manchester and Staffordshire coach.

An extraordinary accident occurred in the same month, when a coach was burnt on the railway. As the "Regulator" coach, from Bristol to London, was proceeding on one of the uptrains to London, having a quantity of luggage on the top, owing to the large quantity of sparks which issued from the chimney, the luggage took fire, a fact which was only discovered by the coachman (who happened, fortunately, to have remained inside) seeing sparks of fire falling from the top of the coach by the window. The coachman, at

the hazard of his life (the train going at the rate of forty miles an hour at the time), got out and clambered on the roof, and by great exertions removed the luggage from the roof, and thereby saved the greater part; but the brisk current of air created by the rapid speed at which the coach was progressing rendered all attempts to extinguish the flame unavailable until the roof was destroyed, when, the embers falling inside, the guard, who had come to the coachman's assistance, succeeded in putting out the fire.

In 1832 Mr. Babbage, in his work on the "Economy of Manufactures," suggested a new plan of conveying the mail. The immense revenue of the Post Office would afford means of speedier conveyance. The letter-bags do not ordinarily weigh a hundred pounds, and were then conveyed in bulky machines of many thousand times the weight, drawn by four horses, and delayed by passengers. Mr. Babbage proposed the erection of pillars along each line of road, these pillars to be connected by inclined wires or iron rods, along which the letters inclosed in cylinders attached to the rods by rings are to slide; persons stationed on these columns were to forward the cylinders from

each point, after having extracted the contents belonging to their own station. In this manner it was calculated that a letter might be sent (from pillar to post) to the furthest limits of the land in the course of a very small portion of time; from London to York, probably, in an hour or two. In the absence of pillars, and in the interior districts, it was suggested that church-steeple, properly selected, might answer the purpose, and in London the churches might be used for the circulation of the twopenny post. The introduction of the rail and the telegraph has completely remedied the evil Mr. Babbage complained of.

In May, 1830, much attention was excited in the neighbourhood of Portland Place by the appearance of a steam-carriage, which made its way through a crowded passage, without any perceptible impulse. There was neither smoke nor noise; there was no external force nor apparent directing agent; the carriage seemed to move by its own volition, passing by horses without giving them the least alarm. Five gentlemen and a lady formed the passengers. One gentleman directed the moving principle, and another appeared to sit unconcerned behind, but his object was ascertained to be the care of

the fuel and water. The carriage was lightly and conveniently built, not larger nor heavier than a phaeton. It went without the least vibration, and preserved a balance in the most complicated movements. The pace was varied from five to twelve miles an hour, according to pleasure.

Coaching is still the only means of conveyance in many parts of the Australian colonies, and in certain districts where the roads are bad, or owing to the nature of the country, it is often attended with considerable danger. The following account of an accident which lately occurred in Tasmania, taken from the "*Hobart Town Mercury*," will probably be interesting to many who have travelled by coach in days gone by.

"An extraordinary accident happened to the Falmouth mail-coach on the 10th instant, and the passengers experienced an escape from an awful death, which seems little short of miraculous. After leaving the little township of Cullenswood, the coach enters St. Mary's Pass, noted both for its extreme beauty and for the danger with which the journey through it is sometimes attended. About four hundred yards from the mouth of the pass on entering, the

road is not more than twelve feet wide. A lofty wall of rock bounds the road on one side, and on the other is a precipice plunging almost sheer down to a depth of between one hundred and fifty and two hundred feet.

“ When Page’s coach arrived at this dangerous spot, on the day in question, a lad with two horses happened to be coming in the opposite direction. Instead of retreating into one of the recesses made for the purpose, while the coach passed, the lad persisted in going on, and drove his horses between the vehicle and the cliff, one of the horses backing across the road in front of the coach, the horses in which took fright and fell, hanging over the precipice. With great presence of mind, the coachman cut the harness, and the horses, thus freed, fell through the brushwood down to the bottom of the precipice of which we have spoken.

“ Fortunately for the occupants of the coach—Messrs. Wikborg and Rattray, who were on their way to George’s Bay—the wheels caught in a log laid on the outside edge of the road, otherwise nothing could have prevented the coach and passengers from following the horses in their headlong fall, with what would almost

certainly have been a fatal result. The horses, strange to say, were found almost uninjured, and an attempt was made to get them up the cliff again, but when one of the animals had succeeded in climbing about fifty feet from the valley, he slipped and fell to the bottom. Subsequently a track was cut by some of the natives of the district, and both horses were got out safe and sound."

CHAPTER X.

COACHING ACQUAINTANCES—STAGE-COACHMEN OF BYGONE AND
MODERN DAYS—AMATEUR DRIVERS—REQUISITES FOR DRIV-
ING—CRACK DRIVERS—A POPULAR DRAGSMAN—HIS PRIVI-
LEGES—HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

CHAPTER X.

I ONCE heard a man say that some of his pleasantest acquaintances were people he had picked up on stage-coaches; but I cannot say “ditto” to that. He must either have been singularly fortunate in his companions, or singularly unfortunate in his general acquaintances. A coaching acquaintance seldom—I should imagine—never ripened into intimacy; seldom, indeed, survived the occurrence that produced it. Had the above authority included stage-coachmen, to a certain degree I would have indorsed his opinion; for, in bygone days, I have sat beside many agreeable dragsmen; and, from the time that the heavy coach gave way to the fast one, there has been a wonderful improvement in the coachmen. The driver was formerly a man of enormous bulk, with a

rubicund face, greatly addicted to strong ale, often indulging in language the reverse of parliamentary.

There are so many varieties of drunkenness, that it is difficult to define the state the old-fashioned coachman was too often reduced to. We hear of a man being “as drunk as a lord;” of being “on;” of being “muzzy;” of being “cut;” of being “two sheets in the wind;” of having “a drop too much;” of being “incapable.” Perhaps of the above epithets “muzzy” would be the most appropriate, as owing to the numerous stoppages at wayside public-houses, the coachman had a tankard to his lips every half-hour.

The fast coachmen were well-conditioned, in many instances well-educated men, who could sing a song, and tell a good story to while away the time. They formed a great contrast to the old-fashioned coachmen of heavy coaches, who were too often drunkards, as I have remarked, and who were conspicuous for their inhumanity in the use of the double thong and a sort of cat-o'-nine tails called “the apprentice,” with which they unmercifully lashed their wheelers.

It was rather amusing, though mischievously

so, to witness the consternation of the inside passengers when some amateur on the box "handled the ribbons." Except with a very fast team, the coachman would turn to his companion and say,

"If you have your driving-gloves on, and would like to take the reins over the next ten miles, you are welcome to do so."

Of course the reply was in the affirmative. If a tyro accepted the offer, it was very easy to discover the difference between the professional and the unprofessional, which the horses themselves seemed to feel. They became sluggish; not all the "gee upping" and "go alonging," and the harmless use of the whip, the lash of which usually got entangled in the lamp or harness, could keep them up to their work.

This was so apparent that some inside passenger would put his head out of the window and inquire the cause of the creeping pace they were proceeding at.

"A heavy piece of road, Sir," responded the coachman, who thought more of the guinea or half-guinea he expected to receive than of the loss of time.

“Why, I declare,” said the inquiring gentleman, resuming his seat, “there’s a young fellow driving, and I rather think it must be his first attempt!”

“Oh, let me out!” exclaims an elderly spinster; “we shall be overturned.”

“Disgraceful!” chimed in another. “It was only last week that the Windsor coach met with an accident through the reckless driving of some inexperienced fellow.”

“I’ll report you,” said an old gentleman, just roused from his slumbers. “I paid my fare to be driven by the proper coachman, and not by a puppy who probably never sat behind four horses in his life.”

“And I’ll have you dismissed, coachman, for risking our lives,” added another.

Then came a jerk, which caused all the insides to break forth into the following exclamations :

“There, I told you!”

“We are going over!”

“Do, pray, take the reins, Mr. Coachman!”

In the mean time the “swell dragsman” and his young friend were laughing heartily at the fears of their precious burden.

“Lots of fear, ma’am, but no danger,” said the former, while the latter inquired where the coachman was going to “shoot his rubbish.”

When some experienced amateur took the reins, and with the aid of the whip judiciously applied, sent the sluggish steed along at the rate of ten miles an hour, the scene above described again took place, for the timid female passenger, like the widows of Ashur, was “loud in her wail.”

In those days young Etonians, Harrovians, collegians, and officers were all taught to drive by the professional coachmen on the road, and anyone that could manage a refractory team over a stage or two of ten miles was deemed a proficient, and fit to belong to the four-horse driving club.

A great many aspirants for coaching honours fancy that sitting quietly on the box, and guiding the animals safely along the road, without coming in contact with a post, a curb stone, or another carriage, is all that is required; but this is far from being the case. To become a downright good coachman, a man should be able to put the team together, so as to alter a trace or bit during the journey; he

must take care that every horse does his work, and must keep the jades up to the collar. He must then be careful to ease his horses up a hill, spurring down one, and taking advantage of any level piece of road, make up for the slower pace of a heavier one. He must also learn how to handle his whip, so as to flip off a horse-fly from his leaders, and to double thong a refractory wheeler when gibbing or refusing to work; he must remain perfectly placid upon the box, even amidst danger never losing his head or his temper, always remembering that upon his presence of mind depends the fate of his passengers.

Many noblemen and gentlemen there are who can drive cleverly broken thorough-bred horses admirably well, but who would be at a loss if called upon to drive a stage-coach or a "scratch" team to Epsom or Ascot. There are, of course, many honourable exceptions, and I select a few, and there may be others, who could worthily fill the places of the late "Oxford Will," Jack Adams, "Piers," "Falkner," "Probyn," and Parson Dennis.

At the head of the list I would place two noble Plantagenets—the Duke of Beaufort and his son, the Marquis of Worcester, who are

nulli secundus; next the Earls of Sefton and Craven, Lords Londesborough, Aveland, Cartington, Cole, and Tredegar, Colonels Tyrwhitt, Owen Williams, the Honourable C. White, and Armytage, Messrs. Cooper, Trotter, F. Villiers, and H. Wombwell.

It may appear invidious to select the above when there are probably many more equally good; but I have witnessed the prowess of the above, and speak not only from what I have myself seen, but from what I have heard from others.

There was something in the nature of a stage-coachman, a whip of bygone days, that *smacked* (we mean no pun) of conscious importance. He was the elect of the road on which he travelled, the imitated of thousands. Talk of an absolute monarch, indeed! The monarch even on his own highway was but a gingerbread one to the "swell dragsman." To him Jem the ostler rushed in servile eagerness, to him Boniface showed the utmost deference, for him the landlady ever had a welcome reception, towards him the barmaid smiled and glanced in perpetual amicability, and around him the helpers crowded as to the service of a feudal lord. Survey him as he bowled along the road,

fenced in coats in Winter, or his button-hole decorated with a rose in Summer. Listen to the untutored melody of his voice, as he directed the word of exhortation to his spanking tits—three chestnuts and a grey—enforcing his doctrine with a silver-mounted whip, the gift of some aristocratic patron of the road, and he will present a feature of social life in England which no other country possessed. Hark! already he is entering the village; the well-known horn sounds, the leaders rattle along the road, and the inhabitants rush out to bid him a hearty welcome. To some he grants a familiar nod, to others a smile of recognition, and a few only are honoured by the warmer salutation of,

“Ah! how are you, old fellow? Glad to see you. Why, you are as fresh as paint.”

He was regarded by all as a privileged person, being possessed of the power to speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul, and, at the rate of ten miles an hour, bring the travelled husband to the partner of his sorrow and his joy. He could transport the lover to the feet of his mistress; he could convey the long-absent son to the arms of his doting parents; he could bear the schoolboy from the scene of his tasks

to his much-sought-for happy holiday home. How delightful was it to behold him on a calm Summer's evening bowling through the market town, through the well-watered streets, with a crew of ragged urchins, screaming and throwing rural bouquets, culled from the hedgerows and verdant meadows, on to the box-seat! A smile is on every face on hearing the sound of the horn—all run to the door to see the coach go by; the maid-servant drops her mop in the hope of a packet from her rustic admirer; the youngster plays truant for a few seconds in the anticipation of a cake from his too-indulgent mother; the shopman quits his counter to ascertain whether a bale of goods has been consigned to him from the metropolis; the pot-boy from the public-house holds out his rabbit-skin cap as the guard dexterously throws the neighbouring squire's daily newspaper into it; the barber extends his apron for his weekly journal; and even the parson, the pedagogue, the lawyer, and the exciseman, the four most influential inhabitants of the place, doff their hats as they recognise the popular "dragsman" and his well-appointed "turn-out."

With respect to his accomplishments they were usually more select than numerous. I

speak of the professional coachman of a century and a half ago, and not of the more gifted ones, and amateurs who came into fashion just before the rail drove horseflesh off the road. If the language of the old whip had not the art of a Sydney Smith, it had the easy style of nature, with expletive beauties more particularly its own. On the Shakspearean principle that “discourse is heavy fasting,” the coachman never changed horses at a wayside public-house or inn without fortifying his stomach with a snack. Flowing, natural, anecdotal, and occasionally witty (garnished with a few hearty national Attic anathemas) was the conversation of the driver in bygone days; while in the science of music he was generally no mean proficient, warbling forth “Robin Adair,” “The Thorn,” “The wood-pecker tapping the hollow beech-tree,” and other popular melodies of the day, to the delight of the outside passengers.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TURNPIKE GATE AT HYDE PARK CORNER—SUBURBAN
AND PROVINCIAL TURNPIKE-MEN—THEIR REFLECTIONS—
PANORAMA OF THE ROAD — THE “OLD WHITE HORSE
CELLAR,” PICCADILLY—GROUPS OF ITS FREQUENTERS.

CHAPTER XI.

FEW, if any, of my readers will remember the time when a turnpike-gate stood between St. George's Hospital and Apsley House, though many will not be unmindful of those near the Marble Arch, Bayswater, and Kensington, all of which were sad nuisances to the inhabitants of the metropolis.

There was, however, a wide distinction between the official in London and its suburbs, and the rural collector. The latter was generally an uncouth, half-sleepy clod, who, on a moderate calculation, detained you three minutes in procuring the ticket and change, finally placing six or eight pennyworth of dirty coppers and a fresh written scrap of paper in your palm, to the detriment of clean

hands or gloves. The suburban was generally “wide awake” to everyone and everything. He might be seen in his easy-chair before the door of his contracted space—his smart, white-painted “box”—smoking a mild havanah, which the kindness of some sporting passer-by had presented him with, making remarks on passing events; and when none occurred he would take part in a duet with his blackbird, whose wicker cage hung by his side, and whistle for want of thought.

His costume was neat; he was ever on the *qui vive*; his mottoes were “No trust,” “*Toujours pay, toujours prêt.*” When, like one of Macheath’s gang, he heard “the sound of coaches,” his cigar was laid aside, a ticket taken from a neatly-arranged file, when he exclaimed “Twopence!” then, twirling the shilling he had received on his thumb-nail, dived into the multitudinous pockets of his white apron, handing out a sixpence and a fourpenny-piece to the nobility, and tenpennyworth of “browns” to the mobility. And what a field he had for contemplation!

High life and low life, the Royal cortége, the thoroughbred team, the barouche and four,

the yellow post-chaise and pair, the smart tilbury, the light dennet, the sporting dog-cart, the heavy “bus,” the gaudy van, the sable hearse, the hackney-coach, the tilted waggon, and the Whitechapel cart.

The first object that attracted his notice might have been a ponderous, lumbering, rickety hackney-coach—I write of the days of the fourth George—the arms emblazoned on the panels, showing that it had once seen better days, a remnant of faded greatness. The driver, too, might also have shone in the glittering throng of St. James’s on a birthday. And oh, what a sad falling off was there! Instead of the three-cornered hat of quaint appearance, bedizened with gold lace and feathers and its smart cockade, a rusty brown, low-crowned beaver, with a wisp of straw for a hatband. The gaudy livery had given place to an old faded coat, bought in the purlieus of the Seven-dials. Where are the well-curled wig, the silken hose, the silver-buckled shoes, the bouquet, the white gloves—where? Echo answers, “Where?”

Behind this vehicle might be heard the wheels of a tilbury, guided by an impatient young exquisite in the extreme of fashion,

his glossy hat perched slantingly on his well-oiled, curly hair; his tight frock coat lined and faced with silk and velvet; the snowy corner of a white pocket-handkerchief peeping out of the breast pocket, perfuming the air with the choicest scents of Arabia; the half-blown moss-rose in his button-hole; his boots shining in all the brilliancy of *day*—and Martin, and his hands enveloped in light fawn coloured kid gloves.

“How much?” asks the dandy.

“Two-pence,” is the reply.

A shilling is thrown to the turnpike man.

“You may keep the change, old fellow.”

“Quite the gentleman!” exclaims the collector.

Then comes the cabriolet (now out of fashion), on its well-balanced springs, plainly painted—“unadorned adorned the most.” See the owner, how he prides himself on his splendid horse and diminutive “tiger!”

“Now, Sir,” exclaims the driver and *mis*-conductor of a galloping “bus,” with two raw-boned bits of blood, ten outside and thirteen in, trying to pass the cabriolet.

“Don’t keep the whole of the King’s highway.”

The unfortunate owner of the cabriolet stops rather suddenly, and finds himself, like the lions at the Zoological Gardens, “stirred up with a long pole.”

A rival “bus” approaches. “Bank ! Bank ! City ! Bank !” cries the conductor. The driver makes a rush to pass both vehicles, locks his wheel in that of the cabriolet, leaving it in what the Americans term “a very unhandsome fix.”

“I hate these French himportations and hinventions, the homnibusses!” exclaims the gate-keeper, “they’re a regular nuisance.”

Then might be seen approaching a pony-phaeton, with a duedecimo postilion, and a pair of long-tailed Arabians, containing two of England’s loveliest daughters—the turnpike-man is lost in admiration. Quickly follows the light Whitechapel cart with a fast trotter, “surrounding objects rendered invisible by extreme *velocity*,” as the owner declares, who by his bulldog and his costume shows he belonged to the once royally-patronised prize-ring. But see! a “drag” approaches; it is

the perfection of neatness, one of Adams's* best—body yellow, slightly picked out with black; under carriage black; two servants in plain liveries behind four spicy nags—three greys and a chestnut—each ready to leap through his collar, put together with skill and working beautifully. The driver is evidently a first-rate artist, a perfect master of the science. See how well he has his team in hand! He is every inch a coachman. Our turnpike-man brightens up and, doffing his hat respectfully, exclaims,

“Now, that's what I like to see—a gentleman patronising the road! He's a right regular and right honourable trump, and no mistake!”

And no mistake was there, for the driver was John Warde. A fashionable equestrian now rides by,

“With heel insidious by the side
Provokes the caper which he seems to chide;”

and a “galloping snob” of Rotten Row, since immortalised in song, follows him. Half a dozen spring-vans decorated with flags and

* Adams, now Hooper, Victoria Street.

laurels, containing men, women, and children, barrels of beer, and baskets of provisions, [are the East-End Benevolent Society, on their road to Bushey Park to enjoy a picnic under its stately avenues of horse-chestnuts.

“ It’s a poor heart that never rejoices !” says the man at the gate, smirking at the females as he gives the ticket, and helping himself to a handful of apples from a neighbouring barrow-woman’s stall, which he throws into the laps of the delighted juveniles. A key bugle, playing “ Love’s young dream,” announces the approach of another “ drag;” but what a contrast to the one I have described ! It is painted green, picked out with red, evidently an old stage-coach metamorphosed ; for a close observer might perceive the words “ Chatham and Rochester,” partly defaced, and painted over with a fancy crest and motto ; the driver sitting, like a journeyman tailor on his board, with one servant behind, with a gaudy livery and gold-laced hat ; the horses, one blind, two kickers and a bolter, evidently bent on having a way of their own. “ Regular Brummagem,” exclaims the man of “ no trust.” “ All is not gold that glitters.”

Next comes a youth on an animal long in the

neck and high in the bone, accoutred with a pair of saddle-bags, his twanging horn announcing him to be the suburban postman, the

“ Herald of a noisy world;
News from all nations lumbering at his back.”

The hand of the clock is on the stroke of four, and, although no carriage is within sight, the collector is at his post, change and ticket in hand; within a few seconds a phaeton, with “harnessed meteors” flashes through the gate. The words “ticket,” “all right,” have passed more quickly than I can write them. That is the carriage of some gentleman who possesses a villa at Richmond, and whose avocations call him to town twice a week.

“That’s a regular gentleman,” says the pike; “quite a timekeeper, no need of a watch the day he passes, and he always stands a turkey at Christmas.”

Next comes a hearse with numerous mourning-coaches, returning from all the pride and pomp of a funeral pageant. What a contrast now to the last time the procession passed the gate! Then the tears of a widowed wife, the sobs of a bereaved daughter, might be heard;

now all is vulgar mirth and uproarious merriment; the trappings of woe, the plumes, the “inky cloaks,” the customary suits of solemn black, are a perfect mockery of grief.

Turn we to a brighter theme. An advanced guard of a crack Lancer regiment announces the approach of the Royal cortége. The acclamations that rend the sky herald the approach of the “observed of all observers,” the luxurious George IV., then in the height of his popularity. Such was the turnpike gate in bygone days.

Few sights were more amusing than the “White Horse Cellar,” Piccadilly, in the old times of coaching. What a confusion—what a Babel of tongues! The tumult, the noise, was worthy the pen of a Boz, or the pencil of Cruikshank. People hurrying hither and thither, some who had come too soon, others too late. There were carriages, hackney-coaches, vans, carts, and barrows; porters jostling, touters swearing, cads elbowing, coachmen wrangling, passengers grumbling, men pushing, women scolding. Trunks, portmanteaus, hat-boxes, band-boxes, strewed the pavement; orange merchants, cigar merchants, umbrella merchants, dog merchants, sponge merchants, pro-

claiming the superiority of their various wares; pocket-knives with ten blades, a cork-screw, button-hook, punch, picker, lancet, gimlet, gun-screw, and a saw; trouser-straps, four pairs a shilling; silver watch-guards—"cheap, cheap, very cheap;" patent pens and (u)ever-pointed pencils, twelve a shilling; bandana handkerchiefs, that had never seen foreign parts, to be given away for an old hat; London sparrows, as the coachmakers would say, "yellow bodies," were passed off as canaries, though "their wood notes wild" had never been heard out of the sound of Bow Bells; ill-shaven curs, "shaven and shorn," and looking like the priest in the child's story, "all forlorn," painted, powdered, and decked with blue ribbons, assumed the form of French poodles who "did everything but speak;" members of the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge were hawking literature at the lowest rate imaginable—"H'annuals at the small charge of one shilling; the h'engravings, to h'any h'amateur, worth double the money;" the "Prophetic Almanack" neatly bound, one penny; "a yard and a half of songs for a half-penny;" and "Larks in London," pictorially illustrated, for one shilling.

The remainder of the group consisting of

perambulating piemen, coachmen out of place, country clods, town cads—gaping, talking, wondering; the din occasionally interrupted by a street serenade, the trampling of cattle, or the music of a guard's horn. In our day, the interesting sight of some well-appointed coach drawn up before the old “White Horse Cellar” may still be witnessed, divested of the noise and confusion of former times. The coachman—generally speaking a gentleman—quietly takes his seat on the box, the guard is attentive to the inside and outside passengers, and at the “All ready!” cheers the lookers-on with the sound of his horn; while the four spicy nags trot along Piccadilly at a steady pace, to be increased when they get off the stones.

CHAPTER XII.

AMATEUR DRAGSMEN—THE LATE FITZROY STANHOPE—THE OLD DRIVING CLUB OF 1808—THE HON. LINCOLN STANHOPE—THE WHIP CLUB—DESCRIPTION OF THE CARRIAGES—SONG OF THE WHIP CLUB—OUTRÉE DRESS OF THE DRIVERS RIDICULED BY CHARLES MATHEWS AND JOE GRIMALDI—FOUR-IN-HAND CLUB OF THE PRESENT DAY.

CHAPTER XII.

HAVING dwelt at considerable length upon stage coaches and stage coachmen, I now turn to amateurs who have distinguished themselves on the box, and who were perfectly competent to take the reins in the event of an accident to the regular driver. Here I am reminded that upon one occasion, when Bramble was driving the Chichester coach to London, and was prevented completing the journey from an accident, the present Duke of Richmond, then Earl of March, took his place, and landed his passengers safe and sound at the “White Horse Cellar,” Piccadilly.

Among gentlemen coachmen of bygone times may be mentioned the late Lords Clonmel and Sefton, Sir Charles Bamfylde, Sir Lawrence Palk, Sir John Rogers, Sir Felix Agar, Sir

Bellingham Graham, Sir Henry Parnell, Sir Thomas Mostyn, Sir John Lade, Sir Henry Peyton, the Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope, the Honourable Charles Finch, the Honourable Thomas Kenyon, Messrs. T. R. and J. Walker, Maddox, Warde (the father of the field and road), Charles Buxton, Henry Villebois, Okeover, Annesley, Harrison, of Shelswell, and last, not least, “Tommy Onslow,” immortalised in the well-known lines :—

“ What can Tommy Onslow do?
He can drive a phaeton and two.
Can Tommy Onslow do no more?
Yes; he can drive a phaeton and four.”

At a later period we have had the Dukes of Beaufort, the Marquis of Waterford, the Earls of Chesterfield, Londesborough, Waldegrave, Sefton, and Rosslyn; Lords Alfred Paget, Alford, Rivers, Worcester, Maedonald, Powerscourt, Colonel Copeland, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, Sir E. Smythe, George Payne, Esq., H. Villebois, Esq., Prince Batthyany, A. W. Hervey Aston, Esq., J. Angerstein, Esq., and T. Barnard, Esq.

And here I am reminded of one who, as an amateur coachman and vocalist, was second to

none. I allude to the late Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope, than whom a kinder-hearted creature never existed. Few men had seen more of the world in all its phases than poor Stanhope ; but under whatever circumstances you met him, whether at the social board, on the racecourse, on the box of a “drag,” in the snuggery of the Garrick Club, or in the shooting-field, he was ever the high-bred gentleman. His nerve and head when on the box were wonderfully good. I well recollect sitting behind him on the late Hervey Aston’s coach at Ascot races, when the owner, who was rather short-sighted, drove his leaders against some very strong ropes that surrounded the booths ; and, as the team was very skittish, we must have come to grief had not Fitzroy, in the coolest manner, helped us out of the scrape by catching hold of the reins. This he did in a most quiet and good-humoured manner, and with so much tact that Aston was pleased instead of being offended.

“ You are an excellent coachman,” said Stanhope, “ but a little too venturesome ; there, take the ribbons again, no one handles them better.”

The above was the second escape from

accident that befell us that day. In driving out of the Knightsbridge Barracks, Aston managed to get his leaders and wheelers huddled together, and, the salute of the sentry at the gate frightening them, the wheel came in contact with the post and the pole snapped in two. Fortunately, assistance was at hand, and the only ill result was a delay of some twenty minutes. I was on the box at the time; and, thinking probably other difficulties might arise on the road, I urged Fitzroy Stanhope to change places. Stanhope's vocal powers were of the first-rate order, as all will bear testimony who listened to his merry and musical voice when he carolled forth "The Swell Dragsman," "The Bonny Owl," "The days that we got tipsy in, a long time ago," and other convivial songs. Poor Fitzroy! his loss was deeply felt by a large circle of friends.

And here let me place before my readers a description of the four-in-hand club of 1808. This club was in the habit of meeting once or twice a month in London, and then proceeding some fifteen or twenty miles into the country to dine, returning at night. It was called the "Driving Club," and the carriages turned out in the following order:—

Sir Henry Peyton's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. Annesley's barouche-landau, four roans, thoroughbred.

Mr. Stephen Glynn's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. Villebois's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. Whitmore's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. O'Conver's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. Pierrepont's barouche-landau, four bays.

Sir Thomas Mostyn's barouche-landau, four bays.

Lord Foley's barouche-landau, four bays.

Mr. J. Warde's barouche-landau, four bays.

“After dining at Bedford,” so writes a chronicler of that day, “they dashed home in a style of speed and splendour equal to the spirit and judgment displayed by the noble, honourable, and respective drivers.”

Another club, called the “Whip Club,” in rivalship with the above, met once a month in Park Lane, and proceeded thence to dine at Harrow-on-the-Hill. There were fifteen barouche-landaus, with four horses; Lord Hawke, the Honourable Lincoln Stanhope, and Mr. Buxton were among the leaders. Lincoln Stanhope was

one of the most popular men of the day. He was never known to say an unkind word, never known to do an unkind action. Peace be with him! for he was one in whom the soldier, the courtier, and the man of honour were so happily blended that, when a few of his remaining compatriots shall have passed away, I fear we may long search the fashionable throng in vain to find another.

The following was the style of the sets-out of the Whip Club:—Yellow-bodied carriages, with whip springs and dickey boxes; cattle of a bright bay colour, with silver-plate ornaments on the harness and rosettes to the ears. The costume of the drivers consisted of a light drab-coloured cloth coat, made full, single-breasted, with three tiers of pockets, the skirts reaching to the ankles, a mother o'pearl button of the size of a crown piece; waistcoat blue and yellow stripe, each stripe an inch in depth; small clothes corded silk plush, made to button over the calf of the leg, with sixteen strings, and rosettes to each knee; the boots very short, and finished with very broad straps, which hung over the tops and down to the ankle; a hat three inches and a half deep in the crown only, and the same depth in the brim; each wore a large bouquet

of flowers at the breast, resembling the coachmen of the nobility on a drawing-room or levee day. The popular song of the Whip Club ran as follows, I only remember the first verse :—

“With spirits gay we mount the box, the tits up to the traces,
Our elbows squared, our wrists turned down, dash off at awful paces;
With Buxton bit, bridoon so trim, three chestnuts and a grey—
Well coupled up the wheelers then—Ya, hip! we bowl away.”

Many most distinguished men have in our day not thought it derogatory to their dignity to work a public stage-coach, and among them may be mentioned the Marquis of Worcester, father to the present Duke of Beaufort, on the “Evening’s Amusement;” and most delightful “amusement” it was to pass an “evening” by the side of the noble Plantagenet. Then there were the Earl of Harborough, on the “Monarch,” Sir St. Vincent Cotton, Bart., the ex-10th Hussar, and Charles Jones, Esq., on “The Age;” the Honourable Francis Stafford Jerningham, on the “Day Mail,” Sackville Gwynne, on the “Beaufort;” John Willan, Esq., on the

“Early Times;” and young Musgrave, on the “Union,” all of whom “fretted their hour upon the stage.” One very great improvement has taken place in the dress of amateur coachmen, whose costume is as different in our day from that of the time when George the Third was king, as the brilliant gas in our streets is from the oily rays that rendered darkness visible in the metropolis.

So outrée was the costume of amateur coachmen early in the present century that it gave rise to innumerable squibs and caricatures. One squib, embodied in a popular song, ran as follows:—

“On Epsom Downs
Says Billy, ‘Zounds!
That cannot be Lord Jackey.
Egad, but now
I see it is,
I took him for his lackey.’”

Again, Charles Mathews, as Dick Cypher in the farce of “Hit or Miss” caricatured the dress so well that he gave offence to many of the noble whips.

Grimaldi, the inimitable Joe Grimaldi, also introduced in a Christmas pantomime a scene in which both coaches and coachmen were ridiculed.

Out of a light-coloured Witney blanket he made himself a box-coat reaching down to his ankles, small plates formed the buttons, a bunch of cabbages the bouquet in the button-hole; a low, white-crowned hat, purloined from "Mr. Felt, hatter," formed his head-dress; boots with paper tops, from "Mr. Last, shoemaker," adorned his legs, to which were attached some ribbons he abstracted from a lady's bonnet; while the carriage which he drove triumphantly across the stage was composed of a child's wicker cradle, with Gloucester cheeses from a butter-man's for wheels, his whip a fishing-rod with a lash attached to it, and four spotted wooden horses, which (before the march of intellect furnished amusing books for the young) formed the stud of childhood, completed the whole.

Seated on a high stool in the above vehicle, his elbows squared, and with the usual number of "ge ups!" "go along!" he convulsed the audience with laughter. What a contrast there is between the dress of the present day and that above recorded! Gentlemen no longer ape the manners or costumes of their coachmen and grooms, but appear as gentlemen should appear.

The heavy box-coat is discarded in Summer for the light-coloured dust-coat ; the hat is no longer preposterously low ; a neat, cutaway olive brown or blue coat, with club buttons, supersedes the over-pocketed drab coat ; well-cut trousers from Poole's, with varnished boots, take the place of the cord "inexpressibles" and brown tops ; the striped, livery-looking waist-coat and gaudy, "bird's-eye" neckcloth are replaced by a plain waistcoat and simple neck-tie.

Then the improvement in coaches, horses, and harness ! The "drags" are not now of showy colours, emblazoned with arms like the Lord Mayor's state carriage ; the horses are thoroughbred and fine steppers, the harness neat and plain. Ladies need no longer scramble up to the box-seat or roof to the detriment of their dresses, small iron ladders being made to fix on the sides, while an amateur player on the cornet-à-piston or horn enlivens the journey with a concord of sweet sounds.

At this present moment there are two coaching clubs—the Coaching Club and the Four-in-Hand Club.

Among the members of the above clubs may be mentioned the following distinguished names :

Duke of Beaufort.
Duke of Sutherland.
Marquis of Londonderry.
Earl of Sefton.
Earl of Macclesfield.
Lord Londesborough.
Lord Wenlock.
Lord Aveland.

Earl of Abingdon.
Hon. L. Agar Ellis.
Colonel Armytage.
Mr. J. L. Baldwin.
Mr. Hope Barton.
Earl of Bective.
Marquis of Blandford.
Lord Carington.
Mr. H. Chaplin.
Colonel Stracey Clitherow.
Viscount Cole.
Mr. W. Cooper.
Earl of Craven.
Mr. W. G. Craven.
Colonel Dickson.
Mr. H. W. Eaton.
Lieutenant-Colonel Ewart.
Adrian Hope.

H. R. Hughes.
Marquis of Huntly.
Sir John Lister Kaye, Bart.
Viscount Macduff.
Count Munster.
Officer driving 1st and 2nd Life Guards Coach.
Lord Muncaster.
Mr. W. E. Oakley.
Mr. R. W. Oswald.
Sir Lawrence Palk, Bart.
Sir Roger Palmer, Bart.
Major-General Sir T. Peyton, Bart.
Lord Poltimore.
Captain H. R. Ray.
Mr. C. Birch Reynardson.
Sir. M. Shaw Stewart, Bart.
Mr. Ans. Thomson.
Lord Tredegar.
Sir Henry Tufton, Bart.
Colonel Tyrwhitt.
Mr. F. Villiers.
Colonel the Hon. C. White.
Captain Whitmore.
Colonel Owen Williams.
Sir George Wombwell, Bart.
Mr. H. Wombwell.
Marquis of Worcester.
Officer driving "Blues" Coach.

CHAPTER XIII.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE MEN—ADVENTURE ON THE FAR-FAMED “TANTIVY” COACH—GALLANT CONDUCT OF THE GUARD—MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT DRIVING—JEM REVELL OF “THE PELICAN”—MY UPSET—TANDEM DRIVING—THE OSTLER—COUNTRY INNS—HOTEL CHARGES.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN the days I write of driving was a favourite pursuit, and, independent of the four-in-hand clubs, every young fellow aspired to handle the ribbons whenever a chance threw a drive in his way. The Oxford and Cambridge men were first-rate dragsmen, and many a reverend who may now devote his leisure to "coaching" youths for college or the Army was then "coaching" very different teams. There were some first-rate "turns-out" on the Oxford road. Never shall I forget an adventure that occurred to me on the box of the far-famed "Tantivy."

We had just entered the University from Woodstock, when suddenly the horses started off at an awful pace. What made matters worse was that we saw at a distance some

men employed in removing a large tree that had fallen during the storm of the previous night across the road near St. John's College. The coachman shook his head, looking very nervous, while the guard, a most powerful man, stood up to be prepared for any emergency.

On we went, the coachman trying in vain to check the galloping steeds, and we had got within a few yards of the critical spot, when the guard, crawling over the roof, managed somehow or other to get on the footboard, when, with a spring, he threw himself on the back of the near wheeler, and with a giant's grasp checked the horses at the very moment the leaders were about to charge the tree.

Down they came, but the guard never yielded an inch, and, with the assistance of the country people nearest at hand the leaders regained their legs without the slightest damage to man, horse, coach, or harness. A subscription for our gallant preserver was got up on the spot.

The coachmen of well-appointed "drags" were a privileged class, they were familiar, "but by no means vulgar," and were universal favourites

with all who came in contact with them; Stevenson, the high-bred University man, who, if not, up to "coaching" young graduates for college honours, easily won his "great go" on the box; Parson Dennis, who drove the "White Lion" coach to Bath, knew more of modern than biblical Jehus; Black Will, who drove the Oxford "Defiance," rather ferocious in appearance, but gentle by nature as a lamb. Others, too, I might mention, if memory served me, who raised themselves to the highest pinnacle of fame as civil, obliging, and intelligent men.

Having already given the doings of others on the road, I shall now proceed to record my own, hoping that I may be forgiven for indulging in that offensive of all offensive pronouns—I.

"The root of all learning," writes Aristotle, "is bitter, but the fruit is sweet," an apothegm which will particularly apply to driving.

I well remember, when I was at a private tutor's, at Littlewick-green, Maidenhead Thicket, and subsequently at Donnington-grove, near Newbury, and a bit of a swell, being greatly smitten with the saying of the above learned philo-

sopher. I never got into a buggy, handled the ribbons, rattled the hired horse along at a crack-skull pace of twelve miles an hour, which generally ended in an upset, without reflecting on the above quoted authority which, being interpreted, means it is wormwood to be immersed in a wet ditch, but pleasant enough to get out again.

Poor defunct Jem Revell, of the "Pelican," Newbury, was my tutor. Under his auspices I first mounted the box of a tandem, learned the elegant and indispensable accomplishment of driving that most dangerous vehicle, and studied the appalling manœuvre of turning out of a narrow inn-yard into a densely populated street. Every day, after hours devoted to study, was my drive repeated, until in process of time inexperience was conquered, and, "with elbows squared, and wrists turned down," I could catch hold of the wheeler and leader, in grand style—remembering with Horace that "*sæpe stylum vertas*," and give the go-by to less dashing whips, with a most condescending nod.

At last, after serving a long and tedious apprenticeship, I reached the long-expected haven of success, and set up a dog-cart and

pair on my own account. Never shall I forget that proud hour of my triumph when I made my first public essay out of the yard of the "Pelican," on my road to Reading racss. I was accompanied by about five or six of my comrades on horseback, and by one or two aspiring Dennets, the drivers of which vainly essayed to beat my two thoroughbred nags.

As we entered the town, for a young "chum" of mine, now long since gathered to his ancestors, sat by my side, the streets were lined with an infinite assemblage of peers and peasants, squires and blacklegs, sporting men and bettors, horse-dealers, jockeys, grooms, trainers, and cardsellers.

However much it may tell against me—however greatly I may lower myself in the estimation of the reader—truth compels me to admit that my aspiring vanity metamorphosed the gaping crowd into admirers of myself and my turn-out; and when my companion sounded the mail-horn, when I cracked my whip and shook my head knowingly—well, *there was not much in that*, as a cynic will remark—I, with "all my blushing honours thick around me," felt as proud as

any peacock that ever strutted in a poultry-yard.

But, alas for human greatness! my pride was doomed to have a fall. Just as we approached the “Bear Inn” the leader became restive, turned round and stared me in the face, a mode of salutation by no means agreeable; then he began to lash out, and finally succeeded in upsetting us and breaking the shafts. Happily, we escaped unhurt in body, though not in feeling.

In thus alluding to scenes of juvenile folly, I cannot forget that I once was young, and that there are still many (among them my only son, now studying farming at Her Majesty’s Royal Norfolk Farm, Windsor Great Park), with others at private tutors’ and college, equally devoted to the box as I was. To them I would offer a few suggestions respecting tandem-driving, which of all vehicles is the most difficult to manage.

Its height from the ground and peculiar lightness of construction renders it, at first sight, a very formidable machine; and the only way to prevent disaster is for the driver to obtain a firm grasp of the reins before he ventures to cheer his tits, and to ascertain the

amount of work which wheeler and leader do, so that the traces may be gently tightened—a proof that both animals are doing their duty. In returning home at night there is no instinct like that of the horse ; he seems to acquire mind by the departure of light, and to succeed best when man is most ready to despair.

I have trotted a tandem from London to Windsor, at twelve o'clock at night, in the midst of the darkest and most tremendous thunderstorm I ever witnessed, with little chance of safety but what I owed to the docility of my horses. This is an instinct which, like that of the prophet's ass, should not be balked ; and so firmly am I convinced of the superior intelligence of the quadruped to the biped, in cases of similar difficulty, that I would actually give up my own fancy to let him have his head, and make the best he can of it. In going down hill, there is one very necessary caution to be observed to which I must now refer.

The mode of harnessing a tandem differs from that most usually adopted in a four-in-hand ; so that if your leader is a faster trotter than your wheeler, he draws the collar over the neck of the shaft-horse, and a partial strangulation not unfrequently occurs. To prevent

this, keep your wheeler at his full pace, slackening in the meantime the extra speed of your leader. The above is necessary at all times—doubly so when going down hill. Whenever you stop to bait, never omit to remain in the stable, unless you have a most trustworthy groom, during the time of feeding. Depend upon it, *haud inexpertns loquor*. There are modern ostlers, of course, with many honourable exceptions, who are not unlike the coachmen satirised by the author of “High Life Below Stairs:”

“If your good master on you dotes,
Ne’er leave his horse to serve a stranger;
But pocket hay, and straw, and oats,
And let the horses eat the manger.”

The oat-stealer, as he has not inappropriately been named, of the present day, will, we fear, in too many cases, follow the example of the unprincipled fraternity above referred to. Independent of this necessary caution, there is surely a feeling of gratitude due to the poor dumb brutes who have toiled all day in our service; and young dragsmen will do well to remember that humanity to defenceless animals is the strongest characteristic of the British sportsman.

Through the introduction of the rail, a great saving has been effected, both as regards time and inn bills. Some of the “old school” still, as far as is feasible, stick to the road; but declining accommodation must diminish their numbers every day. Nothing is now so forlorn as a great, rambling, half aired, half appointed country inn; waiter acting boots, boots acting post-boy, or, may be, all three; and cook acting chambermaid, barmaid, and all. The extinction of the old posting-houses is, perhaps, the only thing connected with the establishment of railways I lament.

There certainly was a nice, fresh, cool country air about the old road-side inns that was particularly grateful and refreshing on a fine evening after emerging from the roasting and stewing of a long London season. The twining roses, the sweet-scented jasmine, the fragrant honeysuckle, the bright evergreens, the flowers and fruit in the trim gardens; above all, the real rich country cream, fresh butter, and new-laid eggs. These—the inns—are now mere matter of history; and the Irishman who travelled with his eggs “because he liked them fresh” is no longer a subject of ridicule. Moreover, these inns were often prettily situated—

some by the side of gliding rivers, others near rushing dams, or overlooking ancient bridges, or commanding views over extensive ranges of rich country scenery—very honeymoonish sort of places some of them were: witness the “White Hart,” Cranford Bridge; the “Castle,” at Salt-hill; the “Salutation,” Ambleside; the “White Horse,” Haslemere; the “Talbot,” Ripley; the “Saracen’s Head,” Beaconsfield; “Royal Oak,” Ivy Bridge; the “Bush,” at Staines; “White Lion,” Hartford Bridge, Hants; the “Swan,” at Chertsey; the “Castle,” Speen Hill; “Sugar-Loaf,” Dunstable; and last, not least, the “Saracen’s Head,” Dunmow, suggestive of “The Flitch of Bacon” and the duties of matrimony—

“To fools a torment, but a lasting boon
To those who wisely keep their honeymoon.”

Happily a few are still kept for happy couples on their wedding tour. The bill was generally the only disagreeable feature about these rural caravansaries; and some of the innkeepers were uncommonly exorbitant. Nevertheless, the majority of the victims were in a favourable mood for imposition. Going to London, they had all the bright prospect of a season’s gaiety

before them, and under that impression people—wise people at least—were inclined to give the reins of the purse a little license, and not criticise charges too severely.

Happy is the man who can pass through life in this easy, reins-on-the-neck sort of way, not suffering a slight imposition to mar the general pleasure of his journey !

Returning from the metropolis, the country innkeeper had the advantage of having his bill contrasted with a London one—an ordeal that none but a real land shark would wish to shrink from. A comparison of inn charges throughout England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, for the same style of entertainment, would be curious if not instructive. They would show (what, however, almost every other line of life shows) that one often pays double for nearly the same thing by going to different places for it. Take a bottle of soda-water, for instance. Walk into a large, fashionable hotel, and desire the waiter to bring you one. You drink it, and ask,

“ What’s to pay ? ”

“ A shilling, if you please, Sir,” (or nine-pence—which is the same thing), waiters at large hotels never having any coppers. If you

were to go to the next chemist's you would get it for fourpence—very likely of the same quality. But the great impositions were, after all, the charges for wax-lights and breakfasts.

Gas has now superseded the former, but breakfasts were and are still charged too high. "Breakfast, with eggs and bacon, three shillings and sixpence," was and is the charge at fashionable hotels; at less pretentious ones you may get the same for two shillings, or at most half-a-crown.

CHAPTER XIV.

NOBLE AND GENTLE DRAGSMEN—JOURNEY TO NEWMARKET—
LORD GRANTLEY'S TEAM—A REFRACTORY WHEELER—USE
AND ABUSE OF THE BEARING REIN—THE RUNNING REIN—
HARNESS OF THE PRESENT DAY—THE ROYAL MAIL—GENERAL
REMARKS ON DRIVING.

CHAPTER XIV.

AMONG the amateur knights of the whip of bygone days, though still remembered by many of the present generation, may be mentioned the late Duke of Beaufort, the Earls of Chesterfield and Harborough, Lords Poltimore, Grantley, and Suffield, Colonel the Honourable Lincoln Stanhope, the Honourable Fitzroy Stanhope, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, Sir Henry Peyton, Captains Angerstein and Tolle-mache.

The head of the Somerset family was a very steady dragsman, and knew his business well. He was a less showy coachman than Lord Chesterfield; but his Grace had the qualification of making each horse do his quantum of work.

Lord Chesterfield, had he possessed a little

more steadiness, would have been scarcely inferior to Stevenson, of the Brighton “Age;” but his exuberant, buoyant spirits ran away with him sometimes; he would lark, and the “old gentleman” himself could not have stopped him. His drag was as well appointed as the Duke’s, and looked coaching all over, without a spice of slang, the prevailing error of many amateurs of that day.

Lord Harborough gave the tyros a hint touching the stamp of horses befitting the occasion. He always drove a good sort himself, and eschewed the long tails; and, but for a little infirmity of temper occasionally, he put his team along in very good form. No man can excel on the box who is not gifted with good temper and patience; for not only his comfort, but his life and the necks of his friends depend upon the above qualities. Horses have as many whims and caprices as their drivers have; they entertain likes and dislikes, in imitation of their owners; and a little attention to the temper and disposition of this useful quadruped is as necessary as any part of the supervision of the stable.

Lord Poltimore’s team of roans were always up to the mark, and were such fast steppers

that any one of them might justly have been termed the *rapid Rhone*. His Lordship had the smartness and quickness so essential in a thoroughly good dragsman.

Four such horses as Lord Grantley's were never put together in the days I write of—they were in every sense of the word matchless. They were purchased at four years old in Yorkshire, and stood nearly seventeen hands high, the colour Arabian grey, with black manes and tails. This was the only admissible case of switch tails; the size and figure of those splendid animals were a sufficient reason for their not being docked. The drag was not a drag, it was an old tub of a family carriage, unworthy the beautiful horses his Lordship drove.

Lord Suffield was the quickest and smartest coachman I ever sat on the box with, and never shall I forget a journey I took with him to Newmarket to attend the July Meeting. We started from “Grillon's Hotel” in Albemarle Street, where his Lordship resided, with four as nice cattle as ever the lover of driving could wish to sit behind; but upon reaching the first stage I found, to my dismay, that we were to proceed with posters for the rest of the journey.

The team came forth from the yard, and were with some difficulty put to, for the near-side wheel, a mare, was somewhat cantankerous ; there was a lurking devil in her eye which foreboded mischief. She took an exception, in the first place, to the pole pieces, and would not be coupled up ; this, however, after a little dodging, leaning, and squealing, was achieved, and then came the start—or, rather, I should say the time for starting ; not an inch, however, would she budge. She planted her fore feet at a most resisting angle in front of her, and there she stuck ; the united forces of the leaders and her collaborateur, the offside wheeler, were insufficient to move her. Coaxing, persuasion, and all sorts of soothing arts were lavished on her in vain ; and as the *suaviter in modo* failed the *fortiter in re* was tried, and with a better result, for after shoving, thumping, and double thonging, she suddenly bolted into her collar and started off at an awful pace. Suffield kept her head straight, though for miles nothing could stop her.

At last the nonsense was taken out of her, and we reached our destination in safety. The mare, as may be imagined, was in no very enviable plight ; she shook from head to foot ;

but we afterwards heard that the lesson she had received was not thrown away, and that she ever after took kindly to her work.

Colonel Lincoln Stanhope had a good team, but he was not a first-rate whip. His brother Fitzroy was incomparably one of the best gentlemen-coachmen in England. Many an aspirant to four-in-hand celebrity was indebted to him for the knowledge in driving they possessed ; and many a friend's life was saved by his presence of mind, coolness, courage, and skill, as I have already said.

Sir St. Vincent Cotton was a first-rate coachman ; and, although he must be ranked among the *genus irritabile*, he possessed great coolness, which he invariably exercised when occasion required it. His horses got away with him more than once, as I can vouch for ; but I know not the man with whom I would sooner be seated on the box under such trying circumstances. His strength of arm was prodigious ; and, although not quite so showy or graceful a whip as some of his compeers, he was a steady and safe one.

Sir Henry Peyton was *nulli secundus* : he belonged to the old school ; his team

was always the same, and his horses were of the right sort—large ones in a small compass.

Captain Angerstein's turn-out was exceedingly neat, but his horses never had a fair chance, as he was continually changing them; and Captain Tollemache was first rate as an amateur whip. Many others are equally worthy of honourable mention, but I have confined myself to those I have sat beside on the box.

A fashion has lately sprung up amongst us, or rather, I should say, been adopted (for it is of American origin), and that is the almost total abolition of the bearing-rein. Much has been said, written, and argued pro and con.; some assert, and with truth, that, generally speaking, it is less safe, for as the best and soundest horse may once in twelve months make a mistake, the advocates for the loose rein cannot help to admit that a bearing-rein must assist the horse to recover himself under such circumstances. All extremes are bad, and no one would wish to torture an animal's mouth by pulling his head into an unnatural position, like a dromedary, with an excruciatingly tight bearing-rein; but, on the other hand, the absence of one is open to

objection. Some horses may, and do, carry themselves so well that a bearing-rein appears superfluous ; but, nevertheless, it may be useful, and for this reason should never be entirely dispensed with. I do not say that exceptions may not be permitted. Those possessed of thoroughbred horses, endowed with superior action, may indulge in any whim or caprice they like ; and animals worth from four hundred guineas to six hundred guineas apiece, and which go with their heads up, of course do not require a bearing-rein, but I condemn the principle for universal adoption ; and I have heard the opinions of some of the best coachmen of the day, both amateurs and professionals, who have asserted that for the generality of horses the practice is a dangerous one. Some animals' heads are put on differently from others, and consequently they vary in their mode of carrying them. Some, for instance, are star-gazers and appear to be taking lunar observations, while others poke their heads forward in such a longitudinal form that they resemble in this particular the Continental swine trained for grubbing truffles. The plan I should like to see adopted would be to have a bearing-rein with an elastic end to it, so that

horses that did not require having their heads held well up would not be deprived of the ornament of such a rein, and even with horses that did require it, if the elastic was pretty strong, it would aid them in case of a trip or stumble.

In former days it was the custom to drive with wheel-reins home—that is, short to the hand; this was decidedly objectionable, especially in hilly counties; and, with groggy wheel-horses, not unattended with danger, for an awkward blunder might pull you from the box. The running-rein is now universally adopted, and in skilful hands is immeasurably superior to the old system. This is observable in the best-appointed fast coaches, of which there are happily still a few left, as well as private carriages.

The harness of the present day is the *ne plus ultra* of good taste: it is infinitely lighter than formerly, although equally strong, and the less a horse is encumbered the better. Look how superlatively neat are the traces of the coaching clubs; they are narrow, but the strength lies in the thickness, and the collars fit to a nicety. The four-in-hand clubs have set a laudable example; they have produced emu-

lation, and emulation produces good horses.

Cuique sua voluptas—which, I believe, literally construed, means “every hog to his own apple;” and, delightful as driving a private drag is—for it pleases the ladies, and all goes “merry as a marriage bell” in an excursion to Richmond, Greenwich, Maidenhead, the Crystal or Alexandra Palaces—it, perhaps, was exceeded by the pleasure of sitting on the box-seat of one of the Royal mails, with four fresh horses every eight miles, and a guard decked out in regal livery behind to whisper in your ear if you did not keep your time. The night-mail was very preferable to a day coach—first, because you seldom met any seedy old fellows outside the mail enveloped in stuff cloaks, with cotton umbrellas, which on a rainy day acted as a spout to convey the water down your neck, and who, on seeing the coachman give up the ribbons would instanter bawl out.

“I say, coachman, I can’t allow that.”

Then the pace on the mail was always good. Again, the mail was not encumbered with huge piles of massive black boxes, fantastically worked with brass nails, belonging to the lady passenger inside; and last, not least, there was a sort of glorious autocratical

independence when you felt that every vehicle on the road made way for the Royal mail.

There is no circumstance of greater importance, as tending to the pleasure and facility with which horses are driven, than that of putting them well together; this, of course, applies to a four-horse team. By this term the due regulation of the harness and the most appropriate place for each horse are implied. If properly attended to, it is wonderful the ease with which four horses may be driven, compared with the effort—in some cases risk—consequent upon an injudicious and unskilful disposition of the appointments. With regard to the team, a little extra power in the wheel-horses is desirable, inasmuch as they have a greater portion of labour to perform in holding back the vehicle down hill; while the high-couraged and free-goers will be most advantageously driven as leaders. Practice alone will render a man a proficient in driving four horses.

To explain the proper mode of handling “the ribbons,” except by actual example, is not an easy task; and the attempt to give hints from which the *sine quâ non* of a good coachman—hands—are to be acquired, is still more

difficult. A few general remarks may, however, not be out of place.

The position of the hand and arm has much to do with appearance, and a vast deal more with the art of driving. The left hand should be carried nearly parallel with the elbow, covering about one third of the body: in that position it is ready for the immediate aid of the right whenever the two are required, which in bearing to the right or left of the road, or in turning, is generally the case, as likewise in shortening the hold of the reins.

The right hand should at all times be kept as free as possible, so as to be able to make a judicious use of the whip when required. A good mouth is essential to comfort and safety; it enables a horse to be guided simply by a turn of the wrist. Many a good mouth, however, has been spoilt by the heavy, dead pull of an inexperienced driver. The greatest care, then, should be taken not to irritate or suddenly check the animal, but by a certain yielding of the hands (the reins being divided in each), enable him to drop his head and play with the bit.

The experienced driver may easily be recognised from the novice the moment he approaches

the vehicle he is about to ascend. He invariably casts his scrutinising eye over his horses, his harness, and his carriage, and, if the least thing be out of place, detects it in an instant; nay, more, he will assist in putting to the horses; and, if I required an illustration of what I have asserted, I should find it in the person of the Duke of Beaufort, who, at the sale of Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard's hunters, last October, before mounting the box, aided in putting the team together, and, when his Grace ascertained that all was right, started off in a manner that would have gratified the heart of Sir Henry Peyton had he been alive to witness it.

CHAPTER XV.

CARRIAGES OF BYGONE DAYS AND THE PRESENT — THE CABRIOLET — ANECDOTE OF THE LATE DUKE OF WELLINGTON — A HUNTING ADVENTURE — AN EVENTFUL DAY — A LUCKY ESCAPE — NOBLE CONDUCT OF THE IRON DUKE — SUGGESTIONS.

CHAPTER XV.

A MONG the “wild vicissitudes of taste,” few things have undergone greater changes than carriages used for pleasure; we need not go further back than the last half century to prove what we have said. Formerly there was the lumbering heavy family coach, emblazoned with coats of arms, with a most gaudy-coloured hammer-cloth, and harness resplendent with brass or silver work. Then there was the neat, light travelling postchaise, and the britzska—the latter imported from Germany—for those who posted on the roads; together with the graceful curricle, in which the gallant Anglesey and the arbiter of fashion, Count Alfred d'Orsay, were wont to disport themselves in the park; the four-horse “drag,” the unpretending “tilbury,” the rural-looking “dennet,”

the sporting mail-coach phaeton, the vis-à-vis, and the cabriolet, a French invention, which was introduced into England after the campaign in the Peninsula.

Of the above few remain. Royalty and some of the leading aristocrats alone patronise coaches. Travelling-carriages, tilburies, dennets, curricles, vis-à-vis, cabriolets, are things of the past, and all that remain to us are town-chariots, “drags,” and mail-phaetons, in addition to which we have “broughams,” “victorias,” waggonettes, and a few private Hansom cabs.

It will scarcely be believed that, some five-and-forty years ago, almost every nobleman and gentleman used the cabriolet, “slightly altered from the French” (as the playbills say), to convey him to dinner, balls, and parties; for example, the late Duke of Wellington, when Ambassador to the newly-restored monarch, Louis XVIII., in 1814-15, seldom, except on state occasions, made use of any other vehicle, the carriages being devoted to the service of the Duchess. This I can vouch for, for at that period I was attached to his Grace’s staff, and was always in the habit of driving him when occupied in paying visits in the morning

or of attending dinners and parties in the evening.

Never shall I forget one evening, at Paris, when driving my chief in his cabriolet from the Hôtel Borghese to the Théâtre Français, I very nearly upset the vehicle; and, as the accident occurred in a very crowded street, it might have been attended with serious consequences. It was an eventful day in my life; and, to explain my distraction on that occasion, I must enter at some length into the cause of it. This I do most readily, as the whole transaction reflects so much credit on the Duke's kindness of heart.

One morning, late in December, the curriole was at the door, and I, equipped for the chase, was waiting to drive Wellington in his curriole to Versailles, the place where the Royal stag-hounds were to meet, when he sent for me. I found him busy over some papers.

“I shall not be able to go to-day,” said he, “but you can have the curriole. Tell the Duke de Berri I have some letters to write, as the messenger starts for England at two o'clock, which will prevent my meeting His Royal Highness. Elmore is sent on for me; and, as he is

short of work, you had better ride him. Don't knock him about."

I briefly expressed my thanks, and started for the rendezvous, where I delivered my message, and mounted the far-famed hunter, Elmore, recently purchased in England for the Duke at a high price. From the manner in which he carried me (at that time a very light weight) many of the field were anxious to possess him; indeed, it was hinted to me that the Duke could command almost any sum for him.

A party of young men headed by Count d'Orsay, afterwards so well known in London, proposed a steeplechase home for a sweepstakes of one Napoleon each, which, had Elmore been my own property, I should have gladly entered him for; but I remembered the Duke's injunction and declined.

Delighted with the character the new purchase had obtained, I started to ride quietly home by myself, when, within half a league of Paris, in crossing a small grip, I found that my horse went lame. To dismount and inspect his foot was the work of a moment, but I could see nothing. No alternative was then left me but to lead the limping animal home, which I did amidst the taunts and jeers of the rabble.

No sooner had I reached the stables than I sent for the head-groom and the Duke's state coachman, to whom I explained all that had occurred.

"Well, you have gone and done it," said the latter, who was a most eccentric character. "We wouldn't have taken three hundred guineas for that horse."

This knight of the ribbons, be it remarked, always spoke in the plural number, and talked of what *we* had done in the Peninsula, of *our* triumphal entry into Madrid, and of how *we* had beaten Ney and all the French marshals.

Happily for me the Duke, who had been occupied all day, was out riding, and I did not see him until we met at dinner. I had fully made up my mind to tell him of the accident before going to bed, but waited until I received a further account of the horse's state.

As a large party was assembled, little was said about the hunt until the ladies left the room, when I was called upon to give an account of the run, which I did. I then mentioned the brilliant manner in which Elmore had carried me, and the panegyrics he had received from all.

“A splendid animal,” said Wellington, “I hope to ride him next Monday at Fontainebleau.”

My heart quailed within me. The hours glided on, and when driving the Duke to the theatre that evening in his cabriolet, so distracted was I that I grazed the curb-stone, and was within an inch of knocking over one of the gendarmes as we approached the theatre.

It was late when we arrived; the last scene of “Orestes” was going on, with Talma as the hero; then followed the inimitable Mademoiselle Mars in “La Jeunesse de Henri Cinq,” from which the English version of “Charles the Second” has been adapted.

To account for the change of monarchs, and to explain the inconsistency of having the wicked Earl of Rochester, the companion of “Sweet Prince Hal,” I may remark that when the drama was first about to be brought out in Paris, during the reign of Napoleon I., the licenser objected to Charles, he being a restored Monarch, so the author had no alternative left him but to rewrite the whole piece or change his hero. The latter course he adopted, trusting that a Parisian audience would not detect the anachro-

nism. The perfect acting of Talma had no charm for me, and when the after-piece began I was too wretched to laugh at the *bonhomie* of the actor who represented Captain Copp, or to appreciate the archness of that child of nature, Mlle. Mars as Betty.

Upon leaving the theatre I became so thoroughly distracted that I scarcely knew what I was about; unluckily a young horse, who was a little skittish, had on that evening taken the place of the one that I had been in the habit of driving, and, as there was an unusual crowd in the streets, extra care was necessary.

With great difficulty I threaded my way through carriages of all descriptions, and was approaching the Rue de Rivoli when I heard a clattering of horses' hoofs behind me and the cheers of some hundreds of people assembled near the entrance to the Palace of the Tuilleries.

“It is the King returning from the Louvre, where His Majesty has been dining with the Duke d’Orléans,” said my companion.

At that moment my thoughts were entirely engrossed with Elmore, and I was rehearsing to myself how I should break the untoward news of the accident to the Duke. So, instead of pulling the left rein to enable the royal cortége

and the cavalry escort to pass me, I pulled the right one, and very nearly brought my chief to grief. Happily, however, at this moment the only damage done was to the leg of a mounted police officer, who soundly rated me in language unfit to be repeated.

Misfortunes they say never come singly; we had not proceeded many yards, when a *gamin*, who had evidently a taste for pyrotechnic exhibitions, let off a cracker, which so frightened the animal I was driving that he bolted across the street, came in contact with a lamp-post, and as near as possible upset the cabriolet. What made it appear worse was that the escort above referred to was returning at a brisk trot to their barracks, and, had we been overturned, the Duke might, for the first time in his military career, have been trampled upon by French cavalry.

“Lucky escape!” was the only remark Wellington made, and as the danger to which I had exposed him had completely roused me from my lethargy, I at once “screwed my courage to the sticking place” and told the whole of my day’s adventures with the hounds.

“Can’t be helped,” said he, in his usual quick manner; “accidents will happen.”

Upon the following morning my worst fears were realised ; Elmore was dead lame ; and when I reported this to his Grace, his only answer was,

“ I cannot afford to run the chance of losing my best horses ; so, in future, you shall have the brown horse and the chestnut mare, and if you knock them up you must mount yourself.”

In a previous chapter I have referred to a carriage accident that occurred to Wellington when I was with him ; and it is somewhat strange that I should again be by his side, and in a great measure the cause of a second misfortune.

I own myself that I regret cabriolets are no longer the fashion. For a man that can afford to keep a number of carriages, a victoria and brougham are all very well ; but the former is only available in fine weather, whereas a cabriolet with a projecting head could defy most showers of rain. A well-appointed cabriolet was a comfortable and gentleman-like conveyance, and, for the bachelor, did the duty of a close carriage at half the expense. A perfect cabriolet horse, however, costs money, and the equipage must be well turned out. A seedy-looking

cabriolet and horse to match are abominations not to be endured.

I have said that a cabriolet should be well “got up;” and in order to do this the owner must possess two horses—one for daylight, and another for night work; a clever “screw” will answer for the latter purpose—one, however, that can go the pace, although he can never show until the gas is lit. No one who values a good horse would dream of allowing him to stand exposed to chilly blasts at the opera, the theatre, or his club.

At no period were carriages better constructed or more neatly turned out than they are in the present day, both as regards vehicles, harness, and horses. At the same time, without being hypercritical, I think some changes might be made for the better. Let me instance the following:—A coachman’s curly wig seems quite out of character when we consider the costume of the day, and it certainly might be dispensed with. Again, a light victoria or brougham are often to be seen with a pair of horses to each, whereas one fine stepper would be preferable; then (happily only in a few instances) the case is reversed, and a carriage, open or shut, meant for two horses, has only

one. Again in the present day, with some exceptions, noblemen and gentlemen do not keep to their old family colours; and occasionally we see a brougham black picked out with blue, and a chariot of quite a different colour. Nothing looked better than the Russell brown and blue, the Rutland and Sefton light yellow, the Hamilton red, the Foley reddish brown, the Harrington dark brown, the Anglesey dark yellow, more especially when the carriages were drawn by splendid horses.

CHAPTER XVI.

HAIRBREADTH ESCAPES—DRIVE TO VALENCIENNES WITH
FREDERICK YATES—MEET A DANCING BEAR—RESULT—WHEEL
CARRIAGES IN TOWNS—STATE OF THE PUBLIC STREETS—GAY'S
DESCRIPTION OF THEM—HACKNEY COACHES—TAYLOR, THE
WATER POET—ROBBERIES IN LONDON—FIRST INTRODUCTION
OF OMNIBUSES.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN addition to the splendid turns-out of the members of the Coaching and Four-in-Hand Club, every cavalry regiment and many infantry corps possess a regimental “drag,” which is always well horsed and usually well driven. During the time I served in the army such a thing was unknown, and the only opportunities officers had of driving were when travelling by stage-coach, or when a tandem was improvised in the barrack-yard.

Many a hairbreath escape have I had from one of these breakneck vehicles. When at a private tutor’s at Donnington, I and a young companion—alas! now no more—hired a tandem from Botham, of the “Pelican,” Newbury, to take us to Reading. Safely should we have

arrived there but for a drove of oxen which met us on our way. The result was the accident related in a previous chapter, and my ankle was dislocated.

My next attempt was when I was on the Staff of the Duke of Wellington, at Cambrai. Frederick Yates, then in the Commissariat Department, afterwards lessee of the Adelphi Theatre, was anxious, like myself, to visit an amateur performance by the officers stationed at Valenciennes; and it was arranged that we should drive over in my dennet, to which he was to add a leader.

All went well until we approached the plains of Denain, when a man leading a dancing bear so frightened our steeds that they set off at a gallop, overturning us in a dry ditch. Unfortunately for me, the handle of my sword, which I had stowed away in front of the apron, came in contact with my body and broke a rib; so, instead of enjoying my visit, I was laid up for a week at a not over-comfortable hotel. This was my second and last appearance in a tandem, and I strongly recommend those who value their limbs never to trust themselves to such a conveyance. In earlier days I have driven four horses many hundred miles on the road

and through the crowded streets of the metropolis, and never once came to grief.

Let me now refer to the use of wheel carriages in towns, which is not of very ancient date among the English people. During the reign of James I. the drivers of both public and private carriages had no other accommodation than a bar, or driver's chair, placed very low behind the horses; in the following reign they rode postilion fashion.

After the Restoration they appeared with whip and spurs, and towards the end of the century mounted a coachman's box. This box, covered with a hammer-cloth, was in reality a box, and within it, or in a leather pouch attached to it, were tools for mending broken wheels or shivered panels, in the event of accidents occurring, which were by no means uncommon; in consequence, first, of the defective construction of the vehicles, which, according to Davenant, were "uneasily hung, and so narrow that he took them for sedans on wheels;" in the second place, from the clumsy driving of carmen in the crowded thoroughfares; and, lastly and principally, from the nature of the streets themselves, full of all the worst perils a coachman could have to encounter. The state of

the street ways, where the ruts lay half a yard deep, did not admit of rapid driving, and we read, even in the days of Charles II., of the Royal coach being upset twice in getting from the City to Westminster.

At this date, and for some generations after, the custom was, when ladies traversed the city in carriages, for the gentlemen gallants to accompany them on horseback, riding in advance, or on each side. These formed a body-guard, not at all unnecessary or superfluous, looking to the swarms of “scourers,” “knights of the road,” and “goshawks” who made free warren of London streets and scrupled at no act of violence. The picture Gay has left us of the street ways in the beginning of the eighteenth century will form some estimate of what they were at an earlier period :—

“ Where a dim gleam the paly lantern throws,
O'er the mid pavement heapy rubbish grows,
Or arched vaults their gaping jaws extend,
Or the dark caves to common shores descend ;
Oft by the winds, extinct the signal dies,
Or smothered in the glimmering socket lies.
Ere night has half rolled round her ebon throne
In the wide gulf, the shatter'd coach o'erthrown
Sinks with the snorting steeds ; the reins are broke,
And from the crackling axle flies the spoke.”

The first hirable vehicles in London were the hackney-coaches, so called not from the village of Hackney, as commonly supposed, but from the old word “to hack,” or let on hire. The first hackney-coaches were stout-built vehicles, fitted for the rough roads of the time; they made their appearance originally in 1625, and were kept at certain inns, where they had to be sent for when wanted, and these were only at this time twenty in number.

In a proclamation issued by Charles I., in 1635, the King prohibited the general and promiscuous use of hackney-coaches in London, Westminster, and their suburbs, as being “not only a great disturbance to His Majesty, his dearest consort the Queen, the nobility, and others of place and degree, but the streets were so pestered and the pavements broken up that the common passage was thereby hindered.” It was therefore commanded that “no hired coaches should be used in London except to travel three miles out of the same.”

Two years after the foregoing prohibition the King granted a licence for fifty hackney-coachmen in and about London and Westminster, to

keep twelve horses each. This licence was extended to other cities and towns. In course of time the increase of street carriages called forth the indignation of Taylor the water-poet. What would that renowned king of scullers, whose wonted boast was that he had often ferried Shakspeare from Whitehall to Paris Garden, and Ben Jonson from Bankside to the Rose and Hope playhouses, have said had he lived in the present days? Probably the poor water rhymer would have drowned himself in his own element, or at least would have drowned his cares in a more spirited mixture. What a fearful picture did he draw of the calamity that assailed his trade!

“ We poor watermen have not the least cause to complain against any conveyance that belongs to persons of worth or quality, but only against the caterpillar swarm of hirelings. They have undone my poor trade, whereof I am a member. This swarm of trade spoilers, like grasshoppers or caterpillars of Egypt, have so overrun the land that we can get no living on the water; for every day, if the Court be at Whitehall, they do rob us of our livings, and carry five hundred and sixty fares daily from us. I pray you but note the streets and the chambers or

lodgings in Fleet Street or the Strand, how they are pestered with coaches, especially after a masque or play at Court, where even the very earth shakes and trembles, the casements shatter, totter, patter, and clatter, and such a confused noise is made that a man can neither sleep, speak, hear, write, nor eat his dinner or supper quiet for them ; besides, their tumbling din, like counterfeit thunder, doth sour wine, beer, and ale, almost abominably, to the impairing of their healths that drink it, and the making of many a victualler's trade fallen."

In a publication entitled "The Thief," Taylor writes :—

"Carroches, coaches, jades, and Flanders mares,
Do rob us of our shares, our wants, our fares ;
Against the ground we stand, and knock our heels
Whilst all our profit runs away on wheels."

The London shopkeepers, too, bitterly complained.

"Formerly," they said, "when ladies and gentlemen walked in the streets there was a chance of obtaining customers to inspect and purchase our commodities ; but now they whisk past in the coaches before our apprentices have time to cry out 'What d'ye lack ?'"

Taylor above referred to, does not appear to have entertained a very high opinion of the tradesmen of his day, for he writes:—

“ When Queen Elizabeth came to the crowne,
A coach in England then was scarcely knowne.
Then 'twas as rare to see one as to spye
A tradesman that had never told a lie.”

Hackney-coaches were admitted into Hyde Park before the year 1694, but were expelled at that period, through the singular circumstance of some persons of distinction having been insulted by several women in masks; riding there in that description of vehicle.

In 1728, the robberies were so frequent in the streets of London, Westminster, and parts adjacent, that Lord Townshend issued a notice offering a reward of £40 “ for each felon convict returned from transportation before the expiration of the term for which he or she was transported, who shall, by the means of such discovery, be brought to condign punishment.” It appears by the above, that the murders, beatings, and robberies were perpetrated in a great degree by returned convicts, Hackney-coaches being their special mark, as the following paragraph which appeared in the “ Post-

man" of the 19th of October, 1728, will prove :—

"The persons authorised by Government to employ men to drive hackney-coaches, have made great complaints for want of trade, occasioned by the increase of street robbers; so that people, especially in an evening, choose rather to walk than to ride in a coach, on account that they are in a readier posture to defend themselves, or call out for help if attacked. Meantime, it is apparent that, whereas a figure for driving of an hackney-coach used lately to be sold for about £60, besides paying the usual duties to the Commissioners for licensing, they are at this time, for the reasons aforesaid, sold for £3 per figure goodwill."

The conveyance now known as the omnibus was borrowed from our Continental neighbours, for it was in existence in France two centuries ago. Its rise and progress may not prove uninteresting. Carriages on hire had long been established in Paris, and were let out by the day or hour from the sign of St. Fiacre.

In 1662 a Royal decree of Louis XIV. authorised the establishment of a *carrosse à cinq sous*, got by a company, with the Duke de

Rohan and two other noblemen at the head of it. The decree stated that these conveyances, of which there were originally seven, built to carry eight persons, should run at fixed hours, full or empty, to and from the extreme parts of Paris; the object being to convey those who could not afford to hire carriages.

The public inauguration of the new vehicles took place on the 18th of March, 1662, and was attended with much state. Three of the coaches started from the Porte St. Antoine, and four from the Luxembourg. Previous to their setting out, the principal legal functionary addressed the drivers, pointing out to them their duties to the public. After this harangue, the procession started, escorted by cavalry, the infantry lined the streets to keep them clear.

Writers disagree as to the reception these conveyances met with. Sauval, in his *Antiquities of Paris*, affirms that the populace hooted the drivers and broke the windows of the carriages with stones; while, on the other hand, Madame Perrier, sister to Pascal, describes the joy with which these “twopenny-halfpenny busses” were received.

It appears, too, that the King took a trip

in one at St. Germain, and a *pièce de circonstance* was got up at the Théâtre Marais, entitled “L’Intrigue des Carrosses à Cinq Sous.” Strange to say, when the fashionable Parisians ceased to patronise the omnibus, it went completely out of favour, as the poorer class declined to travel in it. Hence the company failed.

In 1827 a society entitled “Entreprise Générale des Omnibus” again introduced the system, which was thus alluded to in the newspapers of 1829 :—

“The omnibus is a long coach, carrying fifteen or eighteen people, all inside. Of these carriages there were about half-a-dozen some months ago, and they have been augmented since; their profits are said to have repaid the outlay within the first year; the proprietors, among whom is M. Lafitte, the banker, are making a large revenue out of Parisian sous, and speculation is still alive.”

During the struggle of the three days in July, 1830, the accidental upsetting of one of these vehicles suggested an idea that barricades could be formed out of a number of them; and this plan was tried and followed out.

Shortly after the introduction of the omnibus

in Paris, a public-spirited individual started two of these carriages in London, which ran from the Bank of England to the Yorkshire Stingo, in the New-road, and were called “Shillibeers,” after the introducer. Each of these vehicles carried twenty-two passengers inside, with only the driver and conductor outside; each omnibus was drawn by three horses, abreast, and the fare was one shilling for the whole distance, and sixpence for half. Since that time the fares have been considerably lowered, and outside passengers are taken.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ADVENTURE WITH BALL HUGHES, COMMONLY CALLED "THE GOLDEN BALL"—A SENSATION AT DARTFORD—A RELIC OF THE COMMUNE—RAILWAYS—PIONEERS OF THE RAIL—INTRODUCTION OF STEAM-CARRIAGES ON ROADS—SEDAN CHAIRS—PADDY'S PRACTICAL JOKE—FEUDS BETWEEN CHAIR-MEN AND HACKNEY-COACHMEN.

CHAPTER XVII.

A N adventure which occurred to me some fifty years ago may not here be out of place. I was dining one day with Ball Hughes, commonly, from his wealth, called “The Golden Ball,” when the conversation turned upon Paris.

“What say you to going there?” he asked.

“I should like it much,” I replied.

“Send for Guy,” continued he, addressing the butler; “and help yourself to claret, we shall not have much time to spare.”

Before I could express my surprise, Guy, the coachman, entered the room.

“Have the travelling-chariot with the four bays round in half-an-hour, and send the

seats and imperial into my room to be packed. By the way," he proceeded, turning to me, "you will want some one to go and tell your servant to bring your clothes, we shall return in a week."

"Are you in earnest?" I inquired, somewhat taken aback at this hasty movement.

"Quite," he answered; "pass the bottle; and, John, take the small front imperial to Lord William's lodgings in Pall Mall, tell his servant to pack it up, and we will call for it on our way."

In half-an-hour the carriage was at the door; we took our seats, the faithful valet ascended the rumble, and the order was given,

"Make the best of your way to Dartford, call as you go by at No. 4, Pall Mall."

It was a lovely evening in July, and despite of having all the windows down we felt greatly oppressed with heat.

"What say you to riding?" inquired my companion; "pull up, boys."

"I am not in trim for riding," I replied, "with these thin white trousers, shoes, and

silk stockings; my legs will be awfully chafed."

"Never mind, my good fellow, we will go as slow as you please, and you shall have your choice, short or long traces."

The postilions had alighted, and, having borrowed their whips, we exchanged places, and in less time than I can describe it the Golden Ball was mounted on a high-stepping thorough-bred leader, while I was piloting two as handsome wheelers as ever trotted their twelve miles an hour.

No event worthy of record occurred upon the road. It is true that the pole occasionally reminded my brother postilion that the traces were slack, that we grazed a carrier's cart upon entering Deptford, that we frightened an itinerant vendor of apples and pears as we dashed over Blackheath, and, finally, that we upset a one-horse chaise standing in the High Street of the town identified with Pigou and gunpowder.

As we drove up to the door of the "Bull Inn" we found, to our great horror, a crowd assembled in front of it.

"Pull up!" I bellowed at the top of my voice.

“I can’t,” responded my friend.

“Then turn in down the yard. Take a good sweep, or we shall upset the carriage.”

We did turn in with no greater damage than carrying away a wooden post, breaking a lamp, rubbing a piece of skin off the near leader, and tearing his rider’s Hessian boot.

A cheer was then heard from the assembled crowd. We jumped off our horses, gave them up to the two postilions, who had hastily descended from the carriage, and made our way to the entrance, where the landlord, landlady, waiter, and ostler stood, looking as much astonished as the inhabitants of Edmonton did when Johnny Gilpin made his appearance in that town. Unfortunately Cowper was not with us to immortalise our adventure.

“Can we have four horses immediately?” asked Ball Hughes, in his blandest manner.

“The packet starts early for Calais.”

“First and second turn out!” shouted the ostler, while mine host could scarcely repress a smile.

An *éclaircissement* took place when it ap-

peared that Queen Caroline, the ill-fated wife of the Fourth George, had been expected; that some Dartford Paul Pry had caught a view of the gold embroidered velvet jackets and caps of the postillions, and had given the signal for the cheers, mistaking the inmates of the carriage for at least Lord Hood in his Chamberlain's dress, Sir Matthew Wood in his Aldermanic gown, or Her Majesty herself decked out in Royal attire. Finding we could not reach Dover in time for the boat to Calais we stopped for the night at the "Rose," Sittingbourne.

I have already referred to the French omnibus; and it may not be here out of place to record an instance of the light-heartedness of our Continental neighbours, who instead of erasing a most painful episode in the history of their country from their minds, appear to perpetuate it, as will be seen by the following statement extracted from one of their own journals:—

"The Parisian Omnibus Company has preserved a curious relic of the late Commune in the shape of an omnibus which the Communists used for one of their barricades, and which was riddled through the street fights between the Versailles troops and the insurgents by as many

as eight hundred shots or bomb-shell splinters. The coachman's box is broken, and only one wheel hangs on to the vehicle."

I have now given the *agrémens* and *désagrémens* of coaching, and have come to the conclusion that all unprejudiced persons would prefer the rail to the road, especially those to whom time and money are objects. A man may now breakfast in London and dine in Dublin, and this journey can be performed at (as compared with former charges) a very considerable reduction.

Pullman's cars, now confined to the Midland, and partly to the Brighton line, will soon become universal. Then a night journey will be free from exertion, and after a good night's rest the traveller will find himself some hundred miles from the place of departure. Those, too, who indulge in "sublime tobacco," whether in the shape of a meerschaum, brier, clay pipe, a mild Havannah cigar, or a Latakia cigarette, can smoke in a covered carriage, instead as of old on the outside of a mail coach, amidst a pelting, pitiless storm. However, as tastes differ, there will always be a certain number of old stagers who, denouncing steam, will talk with rapture of the palmy days of the road, and

of their delight when they went “coaching, a long time ago.”

Railways were originally formed altogether of timber, and it was not until 1767 that the first experiment was tried, and that upon a very small scale, to determine the advantage of substituting iron for the less durable material. Nor does it appear that this experiment was successful, or followed by any practical result, for in 1797 Mr. Carr claimed to be considered the inventor of cast-iron rails.

The railways which were constructed up to the beginning of 1800 were all private undertakings, and each was confined to the use of the establishment—generally a colliery—in which it was employed. The public railways of the United Kingdom are strictly creations of the present century. Here I may remark that as early as the year 1216 the idea of applying the power of steam to locomotion first suggested itself. Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar, who flourished during the reign of Henry III., foretold that ships would some day move without sails, and carriages without horses; and though his scientific researches were not duly appreciated in his own times, he may fairly take rank

with the greatest pioneers of modern discovery.

In the days of Charles II., Edward Somerset, Earl of Glamorgan and Marquis of Worcester, invented and constructed the first steam-engine. His title to this honour has been the subject of dispute, some historians attributing to him a greater share of merit than there was sufficient evidence to warrant, while others deprive him of even that honour to which he possesses an indefeasible claim. Possessing inventive genius of the highest order, he was considered a mad enthusiast, because his speculations were advanced so far before the age in which he lived, and he has been set down as a quack and impostor by men incapable of comprehending the nature or appreciating the value of his creations.

The slow march of knowledge and of time has at last revealed the worth and established the character of an illustrious and unfortunate man of genius, who only lived to complete his mighty design and carry it happily into effect. Macaulay thus refers to the Marquis of Worcester :—

“The Marquis had observed the expansive power of moisture rarefied by heat. After many

experiments, he had succeeded in constructing a rude steam-engine, which he called a fire-waterwork, and which he pronounced to be an admirable and most forcible instrument of propulsion."

But the Marquis was suspected to be a madman, and known to be a Papist, his inventions therefore found no favourable reception. His fire-waterwork might, perhaps, furnish matter for conversation at a meeting of the Royal Society, but was not applied to any practical purpose.

The next engine was invented by Captain Savery, in 1698, for the purpose of raising water by the help of fire. Newcomen came next, followed by James Watt.

And here I must pay a passing tribute to the inventive genius and wonderful discoveries of James Watt, to whom, perhaps, more than to any other man, the world is indebted for the beneficial results which have flown from the development of steam power.

Some six hundred years after Roger Bacon's prophecy, another prophet arose. In 1804, so writes a popular author, "George Stephenson was a poor labourer, his son Robert lying in his cradle; then the stage-coach dragged along

its weary course at about five miles an hour, and a letter posted in London would reach Edinburgh *perhaps* in a week. In 1824 the father said to the son :—

“I tell you what I think, my lad. You will live to see the day, though I may not, when railroads will supersede all other modes of conveyance; when mail coaches will go by railway, and railways become the great highway for the King and his subjects. The time is coming when it will be cheaper for a working man to travel by railway than to walk on foot.”

A bold, a daring, but a great social and patriotic prediction: both father and son lived to see it fulfilled. These wonderful changes have been brought about through the perseverance of a quintuple alliance—the Stephensons, Brunels, and Locke—of each of whom it may be said, if you seek his monument, “Look not at the place of his birth, his abode, or his death, but survey his works throughout the greater part of the habitable globe.”

In 1824 the first locomotive constructed by George Stephenson travelled at the rate of six miles an hour; in 1829 the “Rocket” travelled at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, and obtained

the prize of five hundred pounds offered by the directors of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company for the best locomotive.

In 1834 the “Firefly” attained a speed of twenty miles an hour; and at the present moment locomotives have increased their speed to over sixty miles an hour. Merciless ridicule attended the introduction of railway travelling; and in reference to a proposed line between London and Woolwich, a writer in the “Quarterly Review” not only backed “Old Father Thames” against it for any sum, but assured his readers that the people of Woolwich “would as soon suffer themselves to be fired off upon one of Congreve’s ricochet rockets as trust themselves to the mercy of such a machine—a high-pressure engine, and going at the rate of eighteen miles an hour.”

The reviewer adds that he trusts Parliament will limit the speed of railways to eight or nine miles an hour, which is as great as can be ventured upon with safety. Despite this prediction, the rail, as we all know, has proved a perfect success.

When railways were first proposed, in order

to prove to Parliament that they would pay, persons called “traffic takers” were placed at the entrance of large towns to note down the traffic in and out of the town. When the Brighton and South Coast line was before the House of Commons, and evidence was given as to the existing traffic, the counsel for the company suggested that they might be allowed fairly to say that this would be doubled, when increased means of travelling were afforded. This seems ludicrous now, when probably one train of passengers and one of goods carries considerably more than the above estimate.

Many ineffectual attempts have been made to introduce steam-carriages on the roads, and in 1822 Mr. (afterwards Sir) Goldsworthy Gurney —inventor of the steam-jet, emphatically called by engineers “the life and soul of locomotion”—constructed a carriage for that purpose. To show that it was capable of ascending and descending hills, of maintaining a uniformity of speed over long distances and on different kinds of roads, a journey was undertaken from Hounslow Barracks to Bath and back. On arriving at Melksham, where a fair was being held, the people made an attack upon the steam-carriage,

wounding the stoker and the engineer severely on their heads from a volley of stones. The return journey was more satisfactory, as the whole distance (eighty-four miles), stoppages for fire and water included, was travelled over in nine hours and twenty minutes, the carriage at one time increasing its speed to twenty miles an hour. The Duke of Wellington and his staff met the carriage at Hounslow Barracks, and were drawn in his Grace's barouche by the steam-engine into the town.

From February to June, 1831, steam-carrriages ran between Gloucester and Cheltenham regularly four times a day, during which time they carried nearly three thousand persons and travelled nearly four thousand miles, without a single accident. Every obstacle, however, was thrown in the way of this new invention; large heaps of stones were laid across the road eighteen inches deep, under the pretence of repairing the highway; and on an Act of Parliament being passed which imposed prohibitory tolls on turnpike trusts, the steam-carriage was driven off the road.

On the journey to Bath above referred to, the toll for the steam-carriage was six guineas each time of passing. About this period Colonel

Sir James Viney patronised a Mr. Pocock and the making of kites for the purpose of drawing a carriage, but these paper horses were ungovernable, particularly in a storm, and Sir John gave them up for a couple of ponies, which, in truth, were almost as wayward.

One conveyance alone remains to which I have not referred—the sedan chair, named after the town of Sedan, in France. In early days I well remember a very gorgeous specimen of the above, emblazoned with the family arms, which used to convey my mother to evening parties; and as late as the year 1834 I have often, at Leamington, Edinburgh, and Bath, made use of a sedan chair to take me to dinner. One advantage this conveyance had over a carriage was that, upon a snowy or rainy night, you could enter it under cover and get out of it in your Amphitryon's hall. Occasionally it was used by young spendthrifts against whom writs were out, as it enabled them to avoid the sheriff's officers. It was not always, however, a safe refuge, as Hogarth, in one of his prints, represents a tipstaff seizing hold of some debtor he was in search of.

Early in the present century a very clever caricature appeared, in which an Irishman was

seen wending his way through dirt and slush, his legs and feet obtruding from a sedan chair —some waggish practical joker (the Theodore Hook of that day) having removed the bottom of it. Two stout chairmen, aware of the trick that had been played upon their inside passenger, are selecting the dirtiest streets, or most flinty part of the road, while the unfortunate Emeralder exclaims :

“ Bedad ! if it was not for the honour of the thing, I would as lief walk.”

The costume of the chairmen at Bath was very peculiar : they wore long, light-blue coats highly ornamented with buttons about the size of a crown piece, the skirts of which reached down to their ankles ; short “ inexpressibles,” white cotton stockings, shoes with buckles, and a huge cocked hat bound with gold lace. They were fine, powerful men, with calves to their legs which would have made the fortune of any fashionable footman. When sedan-chairs were first introduced, a great feud arose between the chairmen and the hackney-coachmen, which led to many serious disturbances. The contest was carried on with the greatest bitterness ; and the hatred it engendered was equal to that of the Montagues and Capulets, the Guelphs

and the Ghibellines, the Red and White Roses ; eventually, through the interference of the law, peace was restored.

Wilson thus refers to the sedan-chair named after Sedan on the Meuse. In his Life of James I., this passage, in speaking of the Earl of Northumberland, occurs : “ The stout old Earl, when he was got loose (he had been imprisoned), hearing that the great favourite, Buckingham, was drawn about with a coach and six horses (which was wondered at then as a novelty, and imputed to him as a mastering pride), thought, if Buckingham had six, he might very well have eight in his coach ; with which he rode through the city of London to Bath, to the vulgar talk and admiration ; and, recovering his health there, he lived long after at Petworth in Sussex ; bating this over-topping humour, which shewed it rather an affected fit than a distemper.

“ Nor did this addition of two horses, by Buckingham, grow higher than a little murmur. For in the late Queen’s time (Elizabeth), there were no coaches, and the First Lord had but two horses ; the rest crept in by degrees, as men at first ventured to sea. And every new thing the people disaffect, they stumble at ;

sometimes at the action of the parties, which rises like a little cloud, but soon vanishes.

“ So after, when Buckingham came to be carried in a chair upon men’s shoulders, the clamour and noise of it was so extravagant that the people would rail on him in the streets, loathing that men should be brought to as servile a condition as horses; so irksome is every little new impression that breaks an old custom, and rubs and grates against the public humour; but when time had made those chairs common, every minion used them; so that that which gave at first so much scandal was the means to convey those privately to such places, where they might give much more. Just like long hair, at one time described as abominable--another time approved of as beautiful.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANCIENT AND MODERN VEHICLES — PRACTICAL JOKES IN
ENGLAND AND FRANCE — FRENCH COACHES — DILIGENCES —
THE MALLE-POSTE — CARRIAGES IN THE REIGN OF LOUIS
XIV. — PORTE FLAMBEAUX — QUARRELS BETWEEN RIVAL
COACHMEN — AN ENGLISH STAGE-COACH IN FRANCE — CON-
CLUSION.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FEW of my readers will remember the old hackney-coaches, and fortunate are they who live at a period when they can be driven about the metropolis and throughout all the principal towns in hansom cabs and "four-wheelers." The old hackney-coach was usually a broken-down, rickety vehicle, that had evidently seen better days; it usually bore the arms and crest of some noble family; the lining, torn and faded, showed signs of former grandeur, as did the harness, now patched and tied together with string. The horses looked more fit to furnish a meal for a pack of hungry fox-hounds than to go through their daily work. The coachman, becaped and bebooted, was a long time descending from and ascending his box, and when seated there it required a large

amount of “ge-upping” and “go-alonging,” with the additional aid of whipping, to get his half-starved, broken-down animals into a trot.

What a contrast to the Hansom of the present day, which, generally speaking, is clean, admirably horsed, and well driven, so much so that the driver of a well-appointed two-wheeler, like Tom Tug, in “The Waterman,” “is never in want of a *fare*!” Would that I could say the same of the four-wheeler! There are some exceptions; but the majority savour too much of the old hackney-coach to merit a eulogium.

Practical jokes have often been played by persons representing highwaymen for the time being; a most memorable one was practised by the celebrated John Mytton, of Halston.

Upon one occasion, a neighbouring clergyman was invited to dine at the Squire’s, as Mytton was called, and in the course of the evening, the conversation turned upon the knights of the road. Whether this casual topic gave the idea to the arch-hoaxter, or that the affair was pre-meditated, I know not, but it was shortly carried out. After a quiet rubber of whist, the Reverend

gentleman's carriage was announced, and he took his departure.

He had not proceeded a hundred yards beyond the lodge-gate, when all of a sudden the carriage stopped, and a man with a black crape over his face presented a pistol, exclaiming,

“Your money or your life,” his companion, equally disguised, catching hold of the horses.

Unarmed, and alone, resistance was in vain, he, therefore, gave his purse to the marauder.

“This won’t do,” said the man. “I must have your watch.”

“Spare that,” beseechingly implored the clergyman. “It is of little value to anyone but myself, and was the gift of a beloved mother”

“No time for sentiment,” continued the other, “you must hand it out,” at the same time cocking the pistol.

The valued gift now changed hands, and the Reverend gentleman was allowed to proceed to his home in safety.

Early the next morning he applied to a magis-

trate for assistance, and proceeded to Halston to inform Mytton of the disgraceful state of the country, when a man could be robbed within a few yards of his lodge.

“I’ll send for the constable,” said Mytton, “a reward shall be offered, and no exertion shall be wanting on my part to trace the scoundrel and get your property restored.”

The clergyman was brimming over with gratitude, when the Squire continued.

“Come and dine here to-morrow, and I’ll send an escort home with you. My keeper and a watcher will be more than a match for any two rascals that infest the road.”

The invitation was accepted, and in the meantime every exertion was made by the magistrate to discover the offenders. During dinner, the conversation naturally turned upon the bare-faced robbery.

“I did not mind the fellows taking my money,” said the victim. “Albeit I could not well afford to lose it, but what I felt deeply was the loss of my watch. I would give any sum in my power to recover it.”

At that moment the second course was put on the table, for at the time I write of *dîners à la Russe* were unknown, and a large

dish with a cover over it was placed before the host.

“I wish,” said Mytton, addressing his clerical friend, “you would kindly carve the pheasants. I sprained my wrist out hunting last week, and if I attempt the job, it will be a case of ‘mangling done here.’”

The dish was removed and placed before the clergyman, and upon the cover being taken off, great was the delight and surprise of the victim to find his purse and watch occupying the place of the far-famed bird of Colchis.

An angry look at the perpetrator of this practical joke was soon transformed into a smile, for the delight of recovering the watch made him ample compensation for the anxiety of mind he had suffered.

A hoax similar in some degree was practised in France on the Baron de Bezenval.

This well-known nobleman was in 1788 on a visit at the house of M. de Bercheni, beyond La Ferté-sous-Jouare, an estate now belonging to the family of Castellane. It was the latter end of Autumn. Some bold poachers already disturbed the sport. The wind blew violently, and strewed the ground with leaves; the morn-

ings were misty, the nights long, gloomy, and cold ; but gloom never approached the place that the Baron inhabited. The *après-dîner* had been excessively merry, and all the company had gradually retired. M. de Bezenval had announced his departure, and being almost the only guest in the room, took leave of the mistress of the house.

“I hope to see you again soon,” said he.

“I hope so too,” replied the lady with courtesy.

He took his departure, and soon fell asleep in his post-chaise, wrapped up in thick fur. He was suddenly roused from his slumbers by a violent shaking. The postilion had been knocked off his horse, a number of armed men surrounded the vehicle, and their leader, whose face was blackened, seizing the Baron, presented a pistol to his breast.

“Sir,” said the Baron, “your men do not know how to behave themselves—they should at least have given me time to draw my hunting-knife.”

Without favouring him with a reply, they stripped him—his cane, rings, snuff-boxes of lapis-lazuli, and his two watches and chains

decked with gems were wrested from him.

“Are you content?” cried Bezenval.

“No,” replied they, “the chaise is ours, as all the rest; get out of it.”

He alighted, and the brigands dispersed, one only mounting one of the horses, and driving off at a gallop.

“Valentine, what is to be done?” said the Baron to his servant.

“I really do not know,” replied the latter; “perhaps the wisest step is to go back to the château.”

Thither they turned, and two hours of most fatiguing walking brought them to it. The gates were open, there were no servants in the courts, and none in the ante-rooms. He entered the drawing-room, and not a soul was in it. But what did his eyes first fall upon? His two watches and their chains were hanging to the chimney-piece! Whilst he was gazing on them, immense shouts of laughter arose, and the bandits of quality crowded into the room in their several disguises. Such was the method devised to bring back the agreeable Baron de Bezenval.

Having described coaching in England, it may not be uninteresting to give a brief notice

of French coaching. It is now two hundred years ago that La Fontaine wrote the following lines, which began his fable “*La Coche et la Mouche* :—”

“*Dans un chemin, montant, sablonneux, malaisé,
Et de tous les côtés au soleil exposé,
Six forts chevaux tiroient une coche.*”

At that time public and private vehicles had not yet undergone any very notable improvements. When an inhabitant of Bordeaux or Maçon took his departure for Paris he made his will, leaving among other things “*son corps à la diligence*.”

Eighty years previous, in the middle of the sixteenth century, private vehicles were not very numerous, if we judge by the predicament in which Henry IV., King of France and Navarre, found himself when he wrote to Sully, “*Je n'ai pas pu aller vous voir hier, ma femme ayant pris ma coche.*” That *coche* which we in England still call coach, and the driver of which has obtained the name of coacher —coachman was either *coche de terre* or a *coche d'eau*, both conveying travellers and goods. The *coche d'Auxerre* alone survived in France until our days. The steam-boats

have sunk it, in despite of its heroic resistance. It was only in the first year of the seventeenth century that *coches* or *voitures*, were first ornamented, and provided with leather braces; they then assumed the generic name of *carrosses*, derived from *char* and *charrette*.

It would occupy too much space to write a history of their transformations and successive improvements, and to follow step by step the aristocratic succession of the *carrosse*, *calèche*, *berline*, *landau*, *dormeuse*, *char-à-banc*, *demi-fortune*, *vis-à-vis*, *coupé*, not omitting the *cabriolet*, *phaeton*, *boguey*, *tilbury*, *kibitka*, *britzksa*, and other vehicles of the young fashion of all times. The public vehicles have made slower progress. The *diligences* long continued worthy of their grandfathers the *coches*, and were very unworthy of their new name.

At the beginning of the present century, in which everything now moves on so rapidly, two days and a night were still required to pass from Paris to Orleans. Travellers slept on the road at Etampes or Pithiviers, a spot rendered immortal by Perlet's admirable personification in “*Le Comédien d'Etampes*;” hotel living, with its good fare and bad beds, being preferred to highroad living, with its obligato accompaniment

of broken down cattle, rickety coaches, and highwaymen armed to the teeth. The diligences gave birth to the messageries, chaises, chaises-de-poste, and at a later period to the malle-postes, which, however, did not prevent certain provinces from enjoying a sort of progeniture of ancient coches, under the various names of voiturines, guimbardes, carrioles, and other instruments of torture, which enabled the traveller to accomplish easily, as the saying went, "twenty leagues in fifteen days."

After that the real *diligences*, the real *messageries*, attained a degree of comfort for which the public were most grateful. To frequent changes and improvement of the horses were added the comfort of the vehicle; and last, not least, the lowness of the prices. The *malle-postes*, destined for the more rapid conveyance of letters, and at the same time of travellers eager to get over their journey quickly—thanks to the attention of the administration—were rendered admirably adapted to the public service, the primary object of their establishment, and to the private service of those who wished for comfort in their travels.

The *caisse* containing the despatches, the high station occupied behind by the courrier-

conducteur of the mail, the *caisse* reserved for travellers, the shape and size of which varied according to the seasons, and the comfortable seat for the passengers, deserved every praise. What could a traveller in those days, when steam was not in prospective existence, desire more than to travel from Paris to Bayonne, two hundred leagues, in fifty-six hours? The humbler history of the *fiacre* also deserves to have a place here. The *carrosse* gave birth to the *fiacre* in the seventeenth century. That was the first coach devoted to public use.

I have already said that the head-quarters of these vehicles were in Rue St. Antoine, Paris, and were called “*carrosses à cinq sous*,” five sous being the price for the hour. The *fiacres* long had a bad name, and not undeservedly so. Who does not remember, even in our days, the wretched equipages that stood on the rank? Who has not had, at least once in his life, a quarrel with the drivers, often more vicious than their cattle? The *cabriolets* for town and country, and the *coucous*, were scarcely superior in any respect, as many have wofully experienced.

Times, however, have altered, and, during

the last few years incredible improvements have taken place, not only in the vehicles, but also in the horses and their drivers. Transformations almost as wonderful as that of Cinderella's fairy carriage have been effected. The carriages are better constructed and suspended, and are arranged more comfortably inside. The creation, too, of one-horse coupés (broughams) has successfully provided for the wants of the public, and at the present time a vast number of new companies, under various names, have vied in skill and conferred upon the people vehicles of tasteful shapes, horses in good condition, totally unlike the *rosses* of former days, harness neat, drivers in uniform liveries, and above all, civil and attentive.

To complete this sketch, let me pay a parting tribute to the Parisian omnibus, that accommodating carriage which takes you up at all hours, at every moment, in the street or at your door, and carries you without any delay to any street or door you wish to alight at--sociable vehicles which, for the trifling sum of thirty centimes, convey you two leagues from the Barrière de l'Etoile to that of the Trône, and from

the Madelaine to the Place de la Bastille.

Would that I had space to review all the varieties of that obliging vehicle, which, it is said, appeared at Nantes, before it invaded the streets, quays, and boulevards of the capital! Were I to enumerate the “Hirondelles,” “Favorites,” “Dames Françaises,” “Parisiennes,” “Beauvaises,” “Orléannaises,” &c., and point out all their graces and charms, it would lead me on to the history of locomotion by conveyance, and the celebration of steam, steam-boats, railroads, trains, and their marvellous rapidity.

Let me conclude with this observation—namely, that the number of vehicles of all sorts which were wont daily to circulate in the streets of Paris exceeded sixty-one thousand; the cabriolets, hackney-coaches, diligences, and omnibusses—or, as the erudite coachman called them omnibii—amounted, out of the above number, to twenty thousand. What they are at this present moment I have no means of ascertaining.

At the commencement of the seventeenth century there were not fifty carriages to be seen in Paris; in the reign of Louis XIV.

all the world possessed them, as they would have been unable to present themselves at court. No longer could they go to the Palace on horses, although the privilege was still allowed to certain Members of Parliament. This, however, ceased entirely about the middle of the reign of Louis XIV.

The adoption of this general use of wheel carriages produced a great change in the habits of social life, and had much influence on the political state of the country. The state of public roads, which the necessity of travelling on horseback imposes, must immediately influence all military movements and all communication of intelligence, must triple the expense of all commercial transfers, and prevent, or render difficult, all merely social meetings, except between the nearest neighbours.

When Laporte, the *valet de chambre* to Anne of Austria, tells us that in the Winter of the year 1636, between Piteaux and Paris, on the route of Orleans, the road was so bad that the Queen was obliged to sleep in her carriage because neither the mules

nor carts that carried her baggage could possibly arrive, we may conceive how little Winter travelling there could have been in France.

Although coaches were already known and used in Paris, they were so unlike the modern vehicles of the same name that the pleasures, engagements, and assignations of the young men were still pursued on horseback.

A printed paper is yet extant in the Royal, or rather Republican Library at Paris, announcing in all its details to the public the establishment by Government of *porte-flambeaux* and *porte-lanternes*; persons provided with them were to be posted at the Louvre, the Palais de Justice, and in other public places at Paris.

These extempore illuminations must have been very necessary in the streets of a great town still frequented by horsemen, where no aid of light was derived either from the doors of private houses or the windows of shops; the habitual darkness only made more visible from the occasional flambeaux carried before some persons of distinction by their own servants, or accompanying their coach.

This establishment of *porte-flambeaux*, which was to take place in October, 1662, was announced with all the forms of a long preamble, and surrounded with all the exclusive privileges which could have accompanied the most important measure of internal government. It furnished a curious example of the minute details into which the hierarchy of despotic power had already entered in France. It called itself “The establishment of *porte-flambeaux*, or *porte-lanternes*, for the town and suburbs of Paris, and other towns, by letters patent of the King, approved of by Parliament, and the prices regulated by this august body.”

Then follows the orders, which forbid anybody from carrying a “link,” or “lantern,” without an express permission from the individual who has obtained this privilege from the king, to the exclusion of all others, under pain of a thousand francs (£40) penalty. The price fixed for the hire of a *porte-lanterne* was three sous a quarter of an hour, for persons who went on foot; for those who went in carriages five sous.

The public are then assured that the convenience of being able to go out at night with lights

will prove such a boon to all, more especially to men of business and in trade, that the streets will be more frequented, much to the discomfiture of thieves and vagabonds. To nightly depredators, the darkness of the streets must have been very favourable, as we ourselves know it is in London during a dense fog. Thus we see Boileau makes one of the torments of a town life the dread of thieves :

“ Que dans le marché neuf tout est calme et tranquille,
Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent,
Le bois le plus funeste, et le moins fréquenté,
Est, au Prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté,
Malheur donc à celui qu'une affaire imprévue
Engage un peu tard au détours d'une rue,
Bientôt quatre bandits lui servant les côtés,
La bourse, il faut se rendre.”

It will thus be seen that the roads in France, and streets in Paris, in bygone days, were as bad as those of England and London; for we find that frequent and fatal *rencontres* took place from disturbances in the streets.

The Prince de Conti and the Comte de Soissons' coaches meeting in a narrow place near the Louvre, by the bad driving of their

coachmen, jostled against each other, and came to blows between their followers, who, departing in that fashion one from another, did, against the next morning call and assemble together such numbers of their followers, as that the Duke de Guise joining his brother-in-law, Prince de Conti, and the Prince de Condé with the Comte de Soissons, his uncle, they came out into the streets with at least three or four hundred mounted men.

In a record of that time, I find the following:—

“There do daily break forth new quarrels between the nobility in this town (Paris), who are here in greater numbers than usually have been heretofore, whereof one being between Monsieur d'Andelot and Monsieur Balagny was presently taken up; and another fell out the other day between Colonel d'Ornano and one Monsieur St. André, who, fighting in the streets, were both hurt, and to avoid the mischief that might ensue from such meetings, the gates of the town were for a time shut up.”

How long the monopoly of *porte-lanternes* continued a profitable concern I know not; but at the end of the reign of Louis XIV.

the luxury of carriages was so universal that riding among the young men was confined entirely to the *manège*, to hunting, and to their military life. A change of dress had indeed necessitated a change in their mode of conveyance. The military costume was no longer that of the Court; their boots and cloaks had disappeared, except when with their regiments; and the knots of ribbons, the short sleeves, the long ruffles, the lace, fringe, and embroidery, and the flowing periwigs now general, were perfectly incompatible with an evening drive from the Louvre to the Marais.

I may here remark that the first English stage-coach seen in France was launched at Dieppe in the month of October, 1816. The horses being put to, Mr. Plant, of London, a coachman of about eighteen stone weight, and a real John Bull, mounted the box, and astonished the inhabitants as much by his dexterity in cracking his whip as by the bulk of his person for the burden of his horses. Away he started for St. Denis amid the various grimaces of the populace.

A company of London proprietors have

obtained the permission of the authorities to run English stage-coaches between St. Denis and Paris. Three more of these vehicles were on their route for the same destination, with English coachmen and harness.

The success of the undertaking was far different from what was expected, and after a time the enterprise was abandoned, the Parisians preferring their lumbering conveyances to the well-appointed “drag.”

In conclusion, I am delighted to find that the love of coaching is not extinct, that at the present time there are some admirably well-appointed teams to be daily seen at the old “White Horse Cellar,” and that they are yearly on the increase. We have the Brighton, the Dorking, the Guildford, the Oxford, the Tunbridge, the Windsor, and the Watford, with cattle that would delight the eyes of a Peer, were he alive to see them.

Both the amateur and professional “dragsmen” do their work well, and during the Summer season nothing will prove more agreeable than the box-seat or an outside place on one of the above mentioned coaches.

I have now reached the last stage, and shall throw aside the ribbons. I trust the journey has been a pleasant one; if so, in the phraseology of the road, I shall say, "I go no further. Please remember the Coachman."

THE END.

ERRATUM.

Page 306 line 20 *for* Peer *read* Pears

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